THE ROUND UP

EDWARD S. ELLIS

Bob Valentine IV

"Into the House!"

THE ARIZONA SERIES

The Round-Up

—OR—

Geronimo's Last Raid

By EDWARD S. ELLIS

Author of "Deerfoot Series," "Boy Pioneer Series," "Log Cabin Series," "Up and Doing Series," "Foreign Adventure Series," "Bound to Win Series," "Paddle Your Own Canoe Series," etc., etc. ∴ ∴ ∴

ILLUSTRATED

By EDWIN J. PRITTIE

THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY

CHICAGO PHILADELPHIA TORONTO

Copyright, 1908, by
The John C. Winston Co.

CONTENTS

			PAGE
CHAP.	I.	THE HELIOGRAPHIC MESSAGE...	9
CHAP.	II.	TEN LITTLE INDIANS.....	25
CHAP.	III.	A SURPRISE.....	40
CHAP.	IV.	WAITING IN THE DARKNESS	55
CHAP.	V.	A CHANGE OF PROPRIETORS....	71
CHAP.	VI.	THE CAMPAIGN.....	85
CHAP.	VII.	THE "HIDDEN TREASURE".....	101
CHAP.	VIII.	THE RENDEZVOUS IN THE FOOT-HILLS.....	117
CHAP.	IX.	"BETRAYED BY A FRIEND".....	133
CHAP.	X.	ALAS!.....	151
CHAP.	XI.	THE CARTEL.....	165

			PAGE
CHAP.	XII.	APACHE HONOR	180
CHAP.	XIII.	FLANKING THE MOUNTAIN SPUR	195
CHAP.	XIV.	DESPOILED	211
CHAP.	XV.	GROPING FOR THE TRAIL	227
CHAP.	XVI.	PARTIAL PAYMENT	243
CHAP.	XVII.	IN THE SIERRA MADRES	258
CHAP.	XVIII.	A QUICK PASSAGE	271
CHAP.	XIX.	SPREADING THE NET	287
CHAP.	XX.	THE ROUND-UP	302
CHAP.	XXI.	GOOD-BYE	325

ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

"Into the House!" ..... *Frontispiece*

She Drew Back in Haste 49

He Saw the Horsemen Halt 111

"Don't Be Scared!" 284

THE ROUND-UP

OR

CAMPAIGNING WITH MILES

CHAPTER I.

THE HELIOGRAPHIC MESSAGE.

ON that flaming afternoon in the summer of 1886, Corporal Billy Bidwell, Maris Roydon and Bob Goodale were riding slowly across one of the baked plains of Southern Arizona.

It was hot enough to roast rattlesnakes. They had rested for hours in the scant shade of a group of pines in the foothills, and should have tarried longer, but they were miles from the command of Captain Lawton, and in so dangerous a situation that they were impatient to rejoin him. Instead of

waiting for the moderate coolness of evening, when they were liable to be drenched by a tropical deluge, they yielded to their impatience and set out for the wooded mountains to the eastward, hoping to reach camp before night closed in.

The clear atmosphere quivered and pulsated with heat. The stumpy cactus, the dwarf juniper, the sage and chaparral wore the same dull tint as the sandy waste. Far to the westward, through the shimmering haze, loomed a towering peak, at whose base nestled a lake of clear, cold water, as blue as the cloudless sky overhead. It was a tempting vision to the thirsty travelers, but none of the three gave it heed. Well they knew that if they headed their ponies toward it, the refreshing picture would dance away from them like the *ignis fatuis* that woos the night wanderer from his path. The *mirage* is one of the most alluring frauds of the Southwest.

The foothills, which were the destination of the little party, were still several miles distant when the Corporal, who was riding slightly in advance of his companions, drew rein.

"What's up?" asked Maris, glancing inquiringly at him.

"They're busy on the top of that peak a little to the left," he replied, pointing at the spot that had caught his attention some minutes before.

At the first glance neither Maris nor Bob saw what he meant. Then they noticed a white flash of light which was little more than a point. It gleamed dazzlingly for a moment, then vanished and was followed by three quick flashes, then by one, then by two, again a longer one, and finally a series of intermittent gleams in quick succession.

"The heliograph!" exclaimed Bob Goodale.

"That's what it is," said the Corporal; the folks seem to be excited the way they're signalling. They must be sending important news somewhere."

When General Miles was arranging his decisive campaign against Geronimo, he did it with a thoroughness of detail that showed the true soldier. From General Hazen, the chief signal officer at Washington, he secured a corps of skilled officers

and men and the best heliographs and appliances that could be obtained.

The country chiefly occupied by the Apaches was, roughly speaking, two hundred miles broad by three hundred miles long. Upon the high mountain peaks of this region were posted strong guards of infantry, supplied with casks of water and enough rations to last them a month in case of a siege. They had the best of field glasses and telescopes, and the finest heliographs. Years before General Miles had established the first line from Fort Keogh to Fort Custer, and later used the instruments in the Department of Columbia, where the distance covered was fifty miles in an air line.

The chief engineer officer blocked out the section and formed a network of communication. New Mexico had thirteen and Arizona fourteen heliograph stations. Some of them communicated with but one other while some reached as many as five. Such was the case at Bowie Peak, Arizona, and at the farthest northern point of the Swisshelm Mountains. The average distance between the stations was in a straight line about

twenty-five miles. Fort Huachuca, however, which communicated with three other stations was thirty-one miles from the nearest.

To test the effectiveness of this ingenious system a message of twenty-five words was once sent over a zigzag course of four hundred miles and returned. The whole time taken for traversing eight hundred miles was four hours. This beat the telegraph, which at certain intervals had to employ couriers.

You understand the working of the heliograph. It is simply a small mirror, generally mounted on a tripod. By passing a dark object before the face of the glass, flashes of light are made of varying length. These indicate letters or words, as in the Morse telegraphic code. The principle is quickly learned.

When, therefore, our three friends saw the signalling from the mountain peak they knew its meaning. By that I do not mean that they could read the message, for, unfortunately, none was able to translate a letter or word. It was a cause of many regrets that neither Bob nor Maris had

learned the system, as he might have done at the opening of the campaign. As a consequence the sentences shot over their heads were so much Greek to them.

Despite the clearness of the air for which Arizona is noted, the party sitting motionless in their saddles could make out nothing except the flickering points, so long as they depended upon their unaided eyes. But Maris unshipped his field glass, and, leveling it at the peak, studied the spot whence came the signals.

In that crystallic atmosphere the revelation was almost startling. While he peered through the glass he spoke for the benefit of his companions:

"On the top of the peak is a small mesa, with a rock which is so black that it must have been painted."

"That's to make the flash show better," was the explanation of the Corporal.

"Three men are standing beside the tripod and seem to be taking turns in working the heliograph. A little to one side are several others whose number I cannot make out."

"Each station has its guard, sometimes

at Fort Bowie that Captain Thompson, of the Fourth Cavalry, was appointed adjutant-general in the field, and he explained how that thing you call the heliograph works?"

"Of course we remember it," replied Maris.

"You know how accommodating he was. I asked a good many questions, and him and the young men that had been sent to work the contraption explained all about it. When you weren't around I pumped the fellows and learned a good deal more than you had any idea of."

"How much did you learn?" asked Bob Goodale.

"I'll show you; let me have that glass agin."

Receiving the instrument, he once more pointed it at the mountain peak where the flashes of light still showed. As he looked he called out:

"'To Corporal William Bidwell and them as is with him: Keep a mighty sharp lookout, for there's a party of Apaches at the base of the foothills that you're heading for; they're waiting for you.'"

Maris stared at his comrade.

"It is wonderful; I never dreamed *he* could read the signals."

"And I don't believe he can—"

"Listen!"

Corporal Billy continued to translate:

"'There are more than twenty of 'em; they'll gobble every one of you unless you change your course.'"

Bob and Maris were mute.

"'We don't care anything for them tenderfeet with you; they don't amount to anything; it wouldn't be any loss if the Apaches got 'em, but you're worth too much to your country to be spared. General Miles heliographed us this morning that if you fell out of line he would give up the campaign agin Geronimo and Natchez. Have a care, for we're weeping barrels of tears on your account.'"

The round, genial countenance was without a shadow of a smile as the Corporal lowered the glass and looked at Bob and Maris.

"What do you think of *that,* boys?"

"I was on the point of saying you weren't as big a fool as you look," said Maris, "but

I'll change it to that you are a much bigger fool than you look."

"And we were lunkheads," added Bob, "to dream for a moment that you could make out the meaning of a single one of those signals. How can a man read a heliographic message when he hardly knows enough to write his own name?"

"Hold on there," interposed Billy with a pretense of anger, "don't you say anything agin my moral character."

"All the same, Corporal," remarked Maris, "I believe you accidentally hit on several truths; you don't deserve any credit for it, but they are true all the same."

"Inasmuch as to when?"

"We have been heading for those foothills, knowing that Captain Lawton isn't many miles away. He is after the hostiles and they are keeping watch of his movements; what more likely than that a lot of them are between him and us?"

"It ain't likely,—it's dead sure."

"And did you intend we should ride straight into ambush?"

"Never had such an idea."

"What *did* you intend?"

"Nothing could have been simpler. We was to ride ahead until within a quarter of a mile or so from where the foothills really begin, and then wheel to the left or right for a long, hard gallop afore we dived in among the rocks."

"Wouldn't the Apaches, if they are waiting ahead of us, shift their position so as to meet us when we made the turn?"

"They couldn't do that without our seeing 'em, and one sight of 'em would be a dead give-away; but I reckon there's one thing you haven't noticed."

"What is that?"

"Point that glass to the left; that is, along the foothills that we have been aiming for."

Maris, who had received back the instrument, did as directed. Hardly had he leveled it, when he exclaimed:

"That beats creation!"

With the unaided eye, Bob Goodale saw what had stirred the wonder of his friend. Less than two miles away was an adobe dwelling, low, flat, dirty in color and without the slightest shade around it. At this time of day it must have been like an oven.

"It's the home of some ranchman," explained the Corporal. "He may have fifty or a hundred cattle that are browsing among the foothills. Do you see anyone about the house?"

Maris carefully scrutinized the place.

"There's not a sign of life about it; what do you suppose it means?"

"It might mean two or three things. The men as belong there may be drowsing somewhere in the shade of the foothills; the other members of the family may be asleep inside the house; or," added the Corporal impressively, "*the Apaches may have called there.*"

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Maris, as he lowered the glass and looked into the faces of his friends.

"Shall we find out whether we can be of any help?" asked Bob Goodale.

Instead of replying directly, the Corporal reached out his hand for the field glass and attentively studied the adobe structure which seemed to obtrude upon their notice as suddenly as if cast up by the earth.

"What help can we give there?" he asked when his scrutiny was over. "If the

Apaches have called they haven't left anybody to be helped, and them as did the thing are beyond our reach."

"You don't think it possible any of the hostiles are inside?"

The Corporal shook his head.

"That ain't their style. What would they stay there for?"

"In the hope that we or someone else would visit the place and walk into the trap, as a fly is caught by the web of a spider."

"You've had some experience with this kind of business," said Billy to Bob Goodale, "and you oughter know a good deal more than you do. An Apache doesn't stay long in one spot, unless hiding among the mountains. If a party of 'em called at that house they finished their killing in whirlwind style, and were off ag'in. So if we went to the place it couldn't do anyone a bit of good."

This sounded sensible, though the boys were curious to know whether anything was amiss at the lonely dwelling. Neither, however, could make any protest against the decision of Corporal Billy, who was so much better qualified than they to act as guide

and leader while they were in this dangerous country.

Thus far the three had ridden in a direct line for the foothills. When they stopped to observe the heliographic signals they did not shift the heads of their horses to the right or left, but kept on as before. Proceeding thus it will be seen that if they had been discovered by any hostiles the latter had plenty of time in which to arrange an ambuscade for the horsemen. Geronimo and his band were well supplied with field glasses, and little escaped their keen eyesight. They were puzzled by the work of the heliograph, and often watched for hours the flickering points of light on the mountain peaks. They knew there were a number of them scattered over their favorite tramping grounds.

What an Indian does not understand causes him a certain awe, but the heliograph had no effect upon the murderous ferocity of the Apaches. They spoke of the manifestations as "whispering spirits," but all the same attended strictly to the fiendish business which was like the breath of their nostrils to them. If there was a party

awaiting the approach of Corporal Billy and his young friends, the flashes on the mountain top caused no change in that party's purpose.

CHAPTER II.

Ten little Indians all in a line,
One tumbled down and then there were nine.
—*Revised Classic.*

FOR some minutes longer the three horsemen held the heads of their ponies toward the foothills, swerving not a pace to the right or left. Corporal Billy rode a little in advance, while Maris and Bob kept side by side. There was no intention in this partition; it was instinctive. As guide and director the man naturally pressed to the front, while the youths modestly held their places at the rear.

But wasn't it hot? Inured as the Corporal had become by his years of service under the blazing sun of Arizona, New Mexico and Sonora, he felt he was tempting fate in thus riding over the sandy plain, where, as he said, there was not enough shade to cool one of his eyes. The scanty

tufts of yellow grass were burned and withered, and only the prickly cacti flourished in nature's oven.

The brassy sky showed no fleecy cloud. Not a breath of air fanned the fiery countenances of the three. Each felt they had made a mistake in leaving so early the meagre shade under which men and horses rested until the meridian had come and gone. Though they knew the suffocating temperature brooded among the rocks and stunted growth of the foothills, yet they looked inviting to those who were out on the blistering plain.

Bob Goodale uttered a slight exclamation. Corporal Billy did not look around, but Maris turned an inquiring gaze upon his friend. By way of reply Bob showed that he had forgetfully slid his bare hand along the stock of his carbine, so as to bring it in contact with the metal of the lock and barrel. It was as if he had touched red-hot iron. The ponies did not sweat, for all moisture was dried up on man and beast.

Something squirmed out of their path and then threw itself into coil, while its vibrating tail gave out a warning like that

of a locust in August. Either Bob or Maris could have shattered the hideous head, as each had done in similar instances, but it wasn't worth while. The ponies pricked their ears and circled a few feet the other way, but showed less horror of the reptile than usual.

A few paces beyond, Maris turned in the saddle and looked back. The rattler was still in coil, evidently expecting and prepared for an attack, even though his enemies had passed him by.

"If you are so anxious, I'll accommodate you," said he, leveling his revolver, though in doing so he believed the hot metal blistered his fingers. He fired only one bullet, which landed among the horrible coils and closed the career of the venomous *crotalus.*

Corporal Billy glanced back but said nothing. His interest lay in the foothills, now only a little way off, and which they were steadily approaching.

The youths scanned the ground in advance, for there was every reason to believe danger lurked there. They noted the gray rocks and boulders, the stunted spruce and pine farther up the slope, and the rugged

crest that must have towered three thousand feet above the sea level. At any rate, it was cooler up there, and they sighed and wished they were on the very topmost elevation.

Without a word Corporal Billy tightened the rein and his animal stopped. The boys rode forward, one on either side, and halted.

"Anything new?" asked Maris.

"Let me have your glass."

The man pointed it at a spot directly ahead. Had the horsemen kept on they would have reached the exact place.

While he was thus employed, Maris and Bob used their keen vision as best they could. That which caught their attention was a series of broken but somewhat flat boulders, behind which rose the tops of some stunted bushes. They showed only a few inches above the stones and were scraggly and withered.

Now, if as the Corporal had believed from the first, a party of Apaches were in hiding in this part of the foothills, nothing in the world could have been easier than for them to stay out of sight until the whites came within certain range. The expectation of

the youths was that their guide would give the word, when all would turn sharply to the left, and, despite the heat, gallop smartly for a goodly distance until it was safe to plunge in among the foothills. Instead of doing so, he was scrutinizing the ground ahead.

Suddenly he lowered the glass, and with a quizzical expression asked:

"Have you counted 'em?"

"What do you mean?" asked the wondering Bob.

"I make ten," was the mystifying reply.

"We don't understand you," said Maris.

"Just watch me and don't say a word."

Sitting erect in his saddle, Bidwell brought his gun to a level and deliberately aimed at the skeleton twigs and scrub. So squarely in front were they that the hot barrel was midway above the ears of his pony, which stood like a statue, knowing well what was coming.

The boys held their breath and kept their eyes on the point at which it was plain to see their friend was aiming. To them he used unconscionable time, but by-and-bye he pressed the trigger. There was a faint blue

puff from the muzzle of his rifle, and the report sounded no louder than a firecracker.

The line of scraggly branches vanished in a flash. Bob Goodale thought he heard a muffled cry, but was not sure.

"Now *git!*" exclaimed the Corporal sharply. As was always the case when the time for action came, he was alert and instant of movement. He jerked the rein, and banged his heels against the ribs of his pony, who dashed off at a gallop. The youths instantly did the same.

Instead of taking a course parallel with the foothills, they headed diagonally away over the plain. This led toward the deserted adobe which interested them a short time before.

"Keep your heads down!" called the Corporal, bending over the neck of his horse. As Maris and Bob imitated him, they heard rapid, dropping shots, and twice caught the whistle of a ball speeding over their heads.

A few minutes, however, took our friends beyond range. They checked their animals, drew them partly around and looked back. Everything seemed as before. So far as

could be judged, no living person beside themselves was in sight.

Sitting thus Corporal Bob said:

"My Molly has a little rhyme which I've heard her sing when I was at home. If we had her with us she might sing it ag'in:

"'Ten little Indians, all in a line,
One tumbled down, and then there was nine.'"

The veteran campaigner now explained that which was already suspected by his friends:

"You seen that line of scrubs on the other side of the flat boulders. I had observed them long ago, and was pretty certain what they was, but couldn't be real sure till I had come pretty close and studied them through the glass.

"The first look settled it. There was a dozen young bucks or less crouching behind the rocks and waiting for us to come near enough to make sure they wouldn't have to fire twice. If we had kept on for a few rods further we'd had a volley that would have been the wind-up of every one of us. But I knowed where to stop."

"By covering their heads with twigs and leaves they might have deceived anyone," said Bob.

"They deceived a couple of tenderfeet, that's certain, but they oughter had more sense than to try it on *me*," remarked the Corporal disgustedly. "All them Apaches is as young as you—more'n likely most of 'em is younger; they're only boys, but they're more pizen than that rattler you bored a little while ago. An Apache baby draws hatred of the white men with the milk from his mother's breast; he is wild to get a chance to kill one of us; he is so eager that he'll take risks his daddy and older relatives will run away from. I've heard General Crook say many times—and he was right—that the worst time in an Apache's life is while he's growing up. If he knows the chances are ten to one ag'inst him, he'll take that one, while the men must have it the other way."

"How is it you know that party behind us is made up of boys?"

"If they were men, they'd kept down out of sight."

"I thought I heard someone cry out when you fired," said Bob.

"An Apache generally lets out a yawp when he gets it plumb," was the significant reply of the Corporal, who gravely winked one eye.

"Do you intend to enter the foothills?" asked Maris.

"That's my scheme—but hello! That's queer."

Like a true plainsman, the Corporal, while conversing with his friends, kept glancing here and there toward the different points of the compass. Thus it was that his gaze rested for a moment on the adobe dwelling, which they had supposed was deserted. It was now less than an eighth of a mile away, and they were in front of the structure.

The side showed a ramada or porch, covered with vines and brush, and with a bench on the right and left of the door. This fashion is common in many parts of the Southwest, the ramada being intended for a partial protection from the excessive heat.

All this would not have been of special interest to the horsemen, but that which

caused the exclamation of Corporal Bidwell was the sight of a woman, who had stepped from the door and come through the ramada into the full glare of the sunlight. She was looking toward them, and, raising her hand, beckoned the horsemen to approach.

"That looks as if we're needed," remarked the Corporal, swinging his pony round and starting him off at a walk. The dash which the animals had made was dangerous to them because of the fiery temperature, and there was no call now for haste.

The woman kept her position until the three were quite near. Then she advanced a few steps and called:

"I am sure you are my friends?"

This inquiring remark was made in Spanish, and good Spanish at that. The Corporal turned to Maris:

"Here's where you get in your work, young man."

Maris, like the gentleman he was, lifted his hat and replied:

"We are your friends and wish to do all we can for you."

"I am in great distress; will you not

dismount and share my poor hospitality?"

No place for the animals was visible. The riders slipped from the saddles and came forward. The sun was now so low in the sky that a ribbon of shade showed on one side of the house. The ponies were directed to this, and the panting beasts moved languidly into the scant protection. There was no grass or water in sight.

The lingual attainments of Maris Royden brought him to the fore for awhile. He begged the woman to be seated. She took the bench on one side of the door. The visitors, with their hats in their hands, sat on the other bench, which was pretty well filled by them.

Naturally the three studied her with interest. She was in middle life, and showed proof of having been brilliantly beautiful a few years before, but care and trouble had stamped wrinkles in the forehead and about the eyes, and the once even teeth lacked completeness in number. But the abundant hair, like the eyes, was of raven blackness; and there was a lithe, suppleness of movement rarely seen except in early youth. She was dressed with the utmost plainness,

though with a neatness which is far from being the rule among her people.

Maris first explained that he and his companions were on their way to join the command of Captain Lawton, which they believed was not far off in the mountains. He and several armed bodies of Americans were hunting down Geronimo and his hostile Apaches who were heading for Sonora. The visitors had noticed this dwelling before, but, seeing no sign of life about it, supposed the family had fled in fear of the Indians.

And then the woman told her story. Her name was Concha Morelos, her husband was Juan and she had a little girl Anita, neither of whom was at home. All were Mexicans, and the husband owned a small ranch upon which they had lived for several years. His drove of fifty cattle were browsing among the foothills, where he spent most of the day looking after them. Twice before, when he was ready to drive his cattle to Hermosilla, the raiding Apaches stole them all, or rather they stole the best and shot the others in wantonness.

Juan, with great trouble and labor, had

gathered the finest herd of all, and had promised his wife that when he sold them he would move into Hermosilla. Anita was growing so fast that he felt it his duty to educate and give her advantages which could never be hers in this dreadful solitude.

That morning Juan had set out as usual to look after his cattle. He took Anita with him, as he had done many times before, for it was more pleasant for her among the foothills than in the baking adobe house. She expected to spend the day with her father, as she had often done; the two returning home at the close of the afternoon. It would soon be time for him to come, but the visit of the Apaches filled the wife with the most distressing anxiety.

"Have you seen anything to cause alarm?" asked the sympathetic Maris.

"I heard the firing of guns a little while ago, and came to the door. I saw you hurrying away and beckoned you to come here, hoping you might be able to tell me something of Anita and Juan."

"You must remember we haven't been among the foothills, so we have had no

chance to meet either of them. Have you seen any Indians to-day?"

"Yes, and I do not know what to make of it. It was a little past noon and I had come to the door to look for Anita when I was frightened by the sight of ten Apaches coming this way. They were not riding, but afoot. They were heading for the house. I ran inside, fastened the door and took up the gun that Juan always leaves with me and waited for them."

"What did they do?"

"They walked right on, talking among themselves until they were close to the house. I could see them laughing as if pleased over something. They called out, but the words were in Apache, so I did not understand what they said."

"No doubt it was a call to you to come out of your home."

"I made no answer and they walked round the house; I think they were afraid, for they could not know how many were inside."

"Why didn't you fire from the door or one of the windows?" asked Maris, angered over the incident.

"Then they would have attacked, and what would have become of me?"

"No danger; they are too big cowards for that."

As Maris talked with the woman he translated for his friends. The conversation had gone this far when Corporal Billy asked him:

"How many did she say was in that party."

"Ten."

"Ask her whether they were young warriors or reg'lar bucks."

The youth put the question.

"All were young; three of them were not more than half-grown; none was as old as you."

"They were our old friends," said the Corporal. Tell the good woman, howsumever, that there ain't ten of 'em now; as I remarked, my Molly would sing:

"'Ten little Indians all in a line,
One tumbled down and then there was nine.'"

CHAPTER III.

A SURPRISE.

THE sympathy of our friends was stirred for the mother who told her pitiful story to Maris Roydon, while he in turn translated it for Corporal Billy Bidwell and Bob Goodale. It appealed strongly to all. The question in the mind of each was what he could do, if anything, to assist in lifting the load of grief from the heart of the wife and mother. Craving her pardon while he talked with his companions, Maris asked:

"Can't we do something to relieve her distress?"

"I've been asking myself that question. Captain Lawton and his troops must get along for awhile without us, for I'm not going to leave her in the lurch."

"That's the way I feel," added Bob, slapping his knee and shaking his head with

a compression of his lips. It was a way he had when his nature was roused.

The Corporal drew out his pipe, deliberately filled it with tobacco, and having lighted it and smoked for a minute or two, said:

"No use of talking, it looks bad for Juan and his little girl; makes me think of Molly."

There was a tremor in the brave fellow's voice, and he blinked his eyes several times. His comrades remained silent.

"But maybe it's not as bad as it looks. We have learned that there are a lot of pi'son young bucks in the foothills yonder, though," he added with a chuckle, "there's one less now than a half hour ago. Besides that, I believe there are more not fur off."

"If that is so, what has become of Juan and Anita?" asked Maris.

"I wish I could tell you, but the hope for them, as I see it, is that the man became used long ago to being raided by the hostiles. They have stole his cattle twice; he's always on the watch for something of the kind, 'specially when he has his herd about ready for the market, or will have when cooler weather comes. When he learned that

mischief was brewing, he has taken care to hide himself and little girl."

Maris looked into the face of the Corporal.

"Do you believe that?"

"No; the most I can say is it's possible. Now don't bring up a lot of objections," protested the Corporal, "for I don't need to be told that everything is ag'in it, but I don't want to break this mother's heart till it can't be helped."

What lent improbability to the theory of Bidwell, in the eyes of Maris and Bob, was the almost certainty that the raiding Apaches would be more likely to discover the ranchman before he gained any intimation of their presence. Moreover, if Juan Morelos had eluded them with his child, he would have found some means of signaling to his wife or of returning to her.

Sitting thus on the bench of the ramada Corporal Bidwell told his friends the crude plan he had formed while listening to the young interpreter. It was startling in its daring chivalry, for the veteran of a truth would be taking his life in his hands.

He proposed that the three should stay

where they were until night, which was now at hand. As soon as the gloom warranted it he would go to the foothills alone in quest of the Mexican and his child. He would be acting on the theory that the two were in a situation in which he could be of use to them.

Neither Maris nor Bob could offer any objection, for it would have been presumptuous to advise one who was much more experienced than themselves, but neither saw more than the most shadowy prospect of success.

"And what are we to do?" asked Maris when the plan had been made clear to him and Bob.

"Stay where you are. She knows how to put up a good fight, but if a gang comes out here to attack the house, I don't see much chance for her, even if she does own a repeating Winchester and can shoot straight. With you two to help her you can stand off the whole gang, with Geronimo and Natchez leading 'em."

Maris now turned to the woman and explained what they meant to do for her. She overflowed with thankfulness and embarrassed the youth by her gratitude. It only

made Maris more distressed for he saw with what astonishing will she held her grief in restraint.

" You will pardon my inhospitality," she said; " you should have eaten before."

She passed into the house with her light, springy step and the three remained outside.

" There ain't any grass or water for the ponies," remarked the Corporal, "and they need both; the only thing to do is to take off their saddles and bridles and turn 'em loose; they'll stray to the foothills as soon as they see they are free, and it won't take 'em long to find where the cattle get what they want."

"And it won't take the Apaches long to find *them,*" suggested Bob.

" You can bet your life on that; don't expect to see any of the animals ag'in, so we'll save what belongs to 'em; when we get back to the command, the old man will give us another mount. We might as well 'tend to it now."

The three passed round the side of the adobe structure to where the band of shade had widened, though the heat was as fer-

vently oppressive as ever. The weary, panting animals stood with drooping heads, seemingly on the point of succumbing as scores of poor beasts did on that last terrific campaign against Geronimo.

The accoutrements having been removed, the ponies were pointed for the foothills, and, with a resounding slap on the haunch of each, they started toward relief. The way in which they snuffed, pricked their ears and went off at a gallop led the Corporal to say:

"They have scented water already; I wish we had some of it. I could get outside of about a barrel if I had the chance."

"There must be some in the house," said Maris; "I shall ask her."

He stepped inside on the smooth, hard floor of adobe. Concha was busy over the meal for her visitors, and looked up with a welcoming expression.

When Maris pronounced the word "Agua," she pointed to a large earthen jar which he had not noticed, sitting beside the door on his right. He called to his friends, and they were quick to join him. The jar, with a capacity of a dozen gallons, was half

full. The lid was a piece of board on which rested a tin cup. The fluid was clear, but tepid. None the less it was refreshing, and each drank his fill.

"Her husband must carry it from some spring in the foothills, and he has to make several trips to fill the thing."

"It's worth it," said Bob with a sigh of content.

By this time, Concha had her meal ready for her guests. In tropical climates one feels little desire for meat or solid food, but is inclined to fruit. That which was provided by the Mexican woman consisted of a species of bean, known as frijoles, and the bread called tortilla. This is made of corn, patted into flat cakes, which are fried as if they were made of batter. She had done all her cooking in the cool of the morning out doors. The tortillas were curved over in the form of a scoop by each diner, and thus used in eating the frijoles.

The humble home was better provided than our friends expected to find. Cheap pictures of a religious character were tacked on the walls, and there were several stools for chairs, with a small square table

in the middle of the room. On this were placed three plates, with a knife and fork, and a cup of water for each.

Observing that the woman had not set a plate for herself, Maris asked whether she would not do them the honor of presiding at the meal. She sadly shook her head:

"I thank you, but my heart is too heavy for me to eat."

"I don't wonder," he remarked to his friends; "God help her and hers!"

It did not take long to finish the simple meal. While it was in progress, Concha sat at the side of the room on one of the stools, attentively waiting to anticipate any wants of her guests. But she had provided more than they cared for, and, thanking her, they passed outside.

Enough daylight remained to see the foothills clearly. The three ponies were still heading toward them. Their gallop had dropped to a trot, and they showed the result of their training in following a trail, for they were going in Indian file, with a few paces separating one from the next.

"They're diving straight into the trap that was set for us," commented the Cor-

poral; "it was lucky we thought to sav the saddles and bridles."

"Which won't be a pleasant burden—"

"Into the house!" suddenly interrupte Bidwell, as he caught up his own accoutre ments; "take yours with you!"

It was a startling interruption, but th youths did not hesitate. In a twinkling a were inside.

A party of horsemen were gallopin rapidly toward them.

The adobe dwelling consisted of tw rooms, divided in the middle by a partitio of the same material. The walls of th building itself were a foot thick, and th baked clay was like so much stone. Ther was a single window to each apartmen but none at the rear.

The woman darted into the single bed room and stealthily peeped out. In th same instant she was back again. She hel her rifle in her hand, and her pale fac showed her excitement, though her man ner was as cool as that of the Corporal hin self.

"*Nuéve!*" she exclaimed.

"What does she mean?" asked Bidwel

She Drew Back in Haste.

"Nine; there are that many Apaches in sight."

"Jiminy!" muttered Billy; "some time when you can spare a half hour I want you to teach me the Spanish lingo."

Concha darted back into the other room. While there was an opening in the partition for a door, there was no door. The Corporal had closed the heavy wooden one at the front of the house. All three, from where they stood, watched their hostess.

They saw her bend her shoulders, look out and then draw back in great haste. Seemingly, while she was doing so, the dull reports of rifles sounded from the outside. Each window was provided with four square panes of glass. The crash and jingle showed that most of those in front of the woman had been shattered. Stepping forward directly after the scattering volley, she brought her rifle to a level, held it thus a second or two and pulled the trigger. A "barbaric yawp" was plainly heard.

Corporal Bidwell droned:

"'Nine little Indians swinging on a gate;
One tumbled off and then there were eight.'"

Maris stepped into the room beside the woman, who stood back out of range and coolly slid a cartridge in place. She laid one hand on his arm.

"Be careful! they will fire again!"

He looked cautiously out. Eight mounted Apaches had drawn up their ponies no more than a hundred yards away, and, sitting motionless, fired into the window. The form of one buck was seen stretched on the plain, while his horse was circling at a distance, as if too scared to understand what had occurred. Those who were unhurt now cantered back for some distance, as if to get beyond range, and moved around so as to face the front of the house. Concha remained in her room, but Maris whisked into the other apartment, and joined his friends.

"Bob," said the Corporal, "slip over to the other window behind you, and the instant you see a chance let drive. I'll 'tend to this side."

The door could be fastened with an enormous wooden bolt, but the Corporal had not put it in place. He drew the door back a few inches. He was closely watching the

horsemen, who finally faced the building, checked their ponies and seemed to be studying the house from that point of view.

"Don't shoot yet," said Billy in a low voice to Maris; "mebbe they'll come closer and I don't want any ammunition wasted."

A casual look would have led anyone to say the horsemen were stationary, but a peculiar flickering of their bodies on the ponies showed they were stealthily inching forward. Their reception had made them cautious.

Suddenly the foremost of the hostiles raised his rifle and sighted at the door. The Corporal gently closed it, all but a thin crack. When a flash spouted over the ears of the pony, and the quick thud of the bullet showed that it had buried itself in the wood.

"Now it's my turn. Thunder!"

In the act of leveling his rifle, a sharp report pierced the Corporal's ear. Supposing Maris had disobeyed him, he angrily turned his head. But, to his amazement, Concha was standing at his shoulder. She lowered her piece and began working the lever of her breech-loader.

Not only had she fired the second shot, but had again brought down her man. He was the leader, too, and the one who a second before had discharged his weapon. He was hit hard, and would have fallen from his animal but for his companions, two of whom, with a single bound of their ponies, placed themselves beside him. He was thus supported in position, and kept his seat as his friends carefully turned the head of his horse away, and slowly rode farther back, facing around again.

"I don't see what use *we* are here," observed the pleased Corporal; "tell her, Maris, that she's the boss of this shebang and we ain't in it with her."

"No need of telling her what she already knows."

Once more the Corporal "dropped into poetry:"

"Eight little Indians, and now there are seven,
'Cause one of the aforesaid dusky red men started
on a short-cut, but never arrived within a
thousand miles of heaven."

There! boys, that's the last; I won't do so any more."

"I'm glad to know that," replied Maris.

Even while repeating his doggerel, Corporal Billy kept the door open a few inches, and never once removed his eyes from the Apaches out on the plain.

"This has been a surprise party to 'em; if they could lay hands on us, wouldn't they show how they can torture a captive? Ah! they're satisfied; they're not used to the kind of reception we give 'em, or rather the lady give 'em, for we didn't have a thing to do with it. We must honor 'em with a parting salute."

The suggestion of the Corporal was obeyed. All four passed through the opened door, and, under the ramada, where the hostiles could see them. The next instant the quartette began firing at the amazed raiders, who wheeled, bent low on their ponies and skurried away. The distance was too great for the whites to see whether they did any execution. None of the Apaches dropped from his horse, though it is quite probable several were hurt. They kept up their flight until they reached the foothills, where they disappeared, the gloom

of the gathering night aiding to veil them from sight.

As Corporal Bidwell had said, the reception was a surprise to the miscreants, who rarely were checkmated in that fashion when on their murderous raids. The rule was that they descended like a cyclone upon the unprepared ranchman's home, put to death in a ruthless manner all the inmates, whether they were men, women or children, and were off again before they could be pursued. In some portions of sorely harried Arizona and Sonora, the people were dazed and made no pretence of defense. Strong men who in other circumstances would have put up a desperate fight sat dumb while the fiends slew them. Even the walled towns in Old Mexico often failed from this cause to give protection. Corporal Bidwell, therefore, made no mistake when he spoke of the reception of this band of hostiles as being somewhat astonishing to them.

CHAPTER IV.

WAITING IN THE DARKNESS.

THE shrewdness of Corporal Bidwell in having his companions join him in a fusillade against the marauding Apaches lay in the moral impression thus made. The miscreants when they rode toward the ranchman's home expected a continuation of the meek and ineffective resistance to their ferocity, which would add only a spice to their delight in massacre.

But that which they received told them what to expect if they dared return and renew the attack. They had not only failed to injure any of the inmates, but had lost two, and possibly more of their own number. It may be set down, therefore, as quite probable that the home of Juan Morelos would be molested no further, at least while the present raid of Geronimo was in progress.

Having staved off the danger for the time,

Corporal Bidwell and the youths resumed their seats on the benches under the ramada. The woman passed inside, where it had become quite dark. They heard her moving about for a while, but soon all was still within. She was evidently praying in the silence and gloom for the loved ones whose fate she could not know for perhaps hours and days.

In accord with the solemnity of the place and occasion, our friends rarely spoke. Corporal Bidwell had relighted his pipe, and, with his gun leaning against the side of the house, his legs crossed and his thoughts busy, he smoked for fifteen minutes without speaking a word.

It was oppressively warm. The profound solitude gave out few noises in the throbbing hush of the night. If the cattle herd belonging to the ranchman had not been run off by the hostiles, it was so distant that no sounds came therefrom. The foothills may have been full of Apaches and white scouts; but, if so, they moved too stealthily to betray themselves.

At the end of the time named it had become fully dark. A full moon would soon

rise, but now the obscurity shut out everything within a radius of a few rods. The straining eye and listening ear saw and heard nothing to cause misgiving.

By-and-bye Corporal Billy struck the bowl of his brier wood against the bench and knocked out the ashes. Then he stowed away the "soothsayer" in his clothes, snatched up his gun and rose briskly to his feet.

"Well, boys, I'm off; stay right here and wait for me."

"How long shall we wait?" asked Maris.

"Two days unless something calls you away; if I'm not back by that time I'll never be back; good-bye."

He did not offer to shake hands. Billy disliked everything in the nature of a scene. He knew the peril he was about to face, and no one could impart anything that would help him.

Nor did he give the youths any instructions or suggestions. They would have been a hindrance had he allowed them to take part in his venture. All they had to do was to stay at the ranch for another night and two days. They would be safer there than

anywhere else. If the hour came for them to leave, they understood the country well enough to make their way out of it, provided such a thing was possible.

Maris and Bob rose to their feet under the same impulse, and stood in silence until the form of their friend blended with the gloom. They had not heard the slightest sound of his footfalls. An Apache warrior could not have moved with more secrecy.

"A strange fellow," said Maris, as the two resumed their seats.

"And worth his weight in gold. This family has no claim upon him beyond that of simple humanity, but he willingly takes his life in his hand for the almost impossible chance of helping them."

"It is Anita who appeals to him; she recalls his own Molly; he knows the love and anguish of the mother's heart. I have made up my mind, Bob, when we go home, to stop over at Denver and hunt up Molly. I want to see her."

"So do I; we'll know her at the first glimpse from that photograph."

"Before we arrive in Denver, I'll telegraph to mother and tell her of the glorious

chance she has for getting rid of some of her surplus wealth. Billy doesn't receive enough pay from the United States to do more than furnish him with tobacco and buy the simplest necessities for Molly; I'll make mother come down handsomely."

"She will be glad to do it."

"You are right; don't drop a hint to Billy, for he must not dream of anything of the kind. We must pray hard for his safety and success to-night, for that's all we can do."

"How shall we arrange matters? One must be on guard all the time."

"That's easy enough; we'll sit here and talk till you feel drowsy; then you can go inside and lie down on your blanket on the floor and I'll wake you long enough before morning to give me a nap."

"What about *her?*" asked Bob, with a flirt of his head toward the open door through which a slight noise showed Concha was stirring.

"I don't know; she won't sleep much, for she is suffering too greatly; it is best not to interfere with her. Isn't that the moon rising?"

"It surely is."

The rim of the great round orb showed above a spur of the foothills climbing so fast that its motion was perceptible. Then as it rose higher it appeared to move slower with a diminishing of size, until well up the sky where it seemed to pause. Its light was not shaded by a wisp of vapor, and it flooded the earth below with soft, silvery radiance.

"Upon what strange scenes it is looking!" said Maris, giving rein to his fancy; "on city, town, plain, river, mountain and solitude, where men live in good will, where they are plotting against one another, on pictures of violence, misery, suffering, calm, contentment and happiness—such as help to make up this wonderful life of ours—"

"Sh!" whispered Bob, laying his hand on the arm of his comrade.

"What is it? I heard nothing."

"Isn't there someone out there on the plain?"

Maris looked keenly at the point indicated by Bob.

"You are right! A man is standing there."

The experience of the youths was like

ours when we look at the Pleiades. If we gaze fixedly we observe but six, as if the seventh star modestly shrinks from scrutiny. We turn our eyes elsewhere for a moment and come suddenly back. All the seven are in plain view, but as we look one of them again withdraws beyond sight.

When Maris and Bob kept their eyes upon the point, they were almost sure they were mistaken, but, by glancing elsewhere and then returning, the form was too plain to be an illusion.

By-and-bye they saw the stranger without resorting to this little artifice. He must have come nearer, but only to pause again, while hovering on the edge of invisibility.

"He has stopped as if afraid to venture closer," whispered Maris, as he reached for his weapon beside him.

"Do you suppose he sees us?"

"The shade of the porch prevents; what can it mean?"

Neither could guess. Naturally the supposition was that he was an Indian seeking, perhaps, to spy out the land. If he were one of the party that had attacked the house some hours before, he must have felt doubt-

ful whether it was safe for him to repeat the venture.

"Maybe he hopes to find none of us on guard."

"It is too early to expect that; there would be reason in your thought if it were much later."

"Why not try a shot at him?"

"We have no right to harm him until we know he seeks our injury. It is possible he means no ill."

"That is incredible."

Strange that in all their guessing the youths failed to hit upon the truth! Had they only suspected the identity of the man who thus loomed up in the gloom, some of the incidents which followed never would have taken place.

There was something so repellant in the thought of firing upon an unknown person that Bob shared the feelings of his friend.

"It looks to me as if he is one of the hostiles who is doubtful whether it is safe for him and those to the rear to come nearer. I think I'll send a shot out there, taking care not to harm him. It will give him a scare, and let him know we are on watch."

"Blaze away!"

Bob came to his feet rifle in hand. In the act of raising the weapon, he lowered it again.

"I don't see anything of him; do you?"

Maris stood beside him and peered out into the darkness.

"He is gone, but he may come back. You need sleep, Bob; go in and lie down."

"Very well; call me when it is my turn."

The two had been at the house long enough to become familiar with the interior. Bob Goodale stepped through the door to where he had laid his blanket on the floor. He unrolled, spread it out and lay down, one end being doubled so as to serve as a pillow. He had slept many a night in the open on the same kind of bed and it was no hardship, now that he had a roof to cover him.

The young man was weary. One can become accustomed to danger, and the peculiar circumstances did not keep off the drowsiness which soon began stealing over him.

He was in that mental condition when he was neither awake nor asleep, and his nerves

were exquisitely sensitive, when he heard a faint footfall. He raised his head and looked around in the darkness. The moonlight which filtered through the vines and entered the door was obscured by the form of someone. Concha had come noiselessly from her room and was passing outside to join Maris. No matter how tired and worn she might be, she could not sleep for long under the poignancy of her fear and anxiety. The last that Bob remembered was hearing the soft, soothing hum of voices, when he glided into unconsciousness, not opening his eyes until hours later.

Maris Roydon was glad to welcome the woman. He shifted his place a little way, and she sat down as his own mother might have done. He longed to say something that would comfort her, but alas! he could think of nothing. He did not see that it would help if he told of that shadowy figure which had come out of the night a short time before only to shrink into the darkness again.

"Our friend who has gone to learn of Juan and Anita is one of the best scouts in the country. When he comes back, I am sure he will have something to tell you."

"When will he come back?" she gently asked.

"It may be to-night, or not until to-morrow; perhaps not until night comes again; we must hope and pray, for we can do no more."

"It is very good of you, who were all strangers to me till a short time ago."

"I beg you not to talk that way; my friend Señor Bidwell has a little Anita of his own."

"Is her name Anita?" eagerly asked the mother.

"No; but she is about the age of your child, and like you he loves her more than he loves his own life. He will hunt for Anita as if she were his own lost darling."

The woman was silent, looking off in the soft moonlight. She was busy with her own meditations. Maris heard her sigh, and his heart went out to her.

"Anita is not quite seven years old; last autumn Juan took her and me to Magdalena; we arrived on the fourth of the month of October."

"Why did you make it *that* date?" asked

Maris, who really knew the reason. He wished to hold the interest of the mother.

"That is the day when we all pray to the image of San Francisco; many hundreds go to Magdalena every year from Sonora, Chihuahua and Durango, and also from Arizona, New Mexico and California in your country, that they may pray to the saint. Then we rode on the railroad to Hermisillo. Ah! what a treat that was to Anita! She had never seen the steam horse before, and clapped her little hands with happiness. She believed for a long time we were sailing through the air as the birds fly. And when we arrived in the city we could hardly restrain her. Have you ever been in Hermosilla?"

"No; I believe it is the capital of Sonora?"

"Yes; and, oh, it is such a splendid place; it must be three times as large as Magdalena, and the cathedral and the capitol are the most splendid buildings in the world. I wish your country had such palaces," added the woman, as if she were really living in Old Mexico.

"We have a good many that will compare

with it," replied Maris, smiling at her enthusiasm. "You intend to make your home in Hermosilla?"

"Yes; when Juan and I saw how happy Anita was we agreed we should not stay much longer in this lonely place, on account of the dear child. I was glad to come out here just over the border and live with Juan when we were first married, for he was poor, but he had worked on a ranch and knew all about cattle. He had good friends who helped him to gather a few cattle together and to build this house. He would have had enough money two years ago if the Apaches had not robbed us. And to think that in a few months we should leave here for good had they not come again! Ah, it is breaking my heart."

"But you must not give up hope yet; I trust that Juan saw his danger in time to escape with Anita."

She sat a little while longer, a prey to her gloomy thoughts, and then abruptly asked: "Why do you stay here when your friend is inside asleep?"

"We agreed we should take turns in watching; it will be prudent to do so."

"I wish you to join him and I will keep guard for you both."

"We could not allow that; it is no hardship for us; you need rest; if you wish to please me, you will go to your room and stay till morning."

At first she refused, saying it was impossible for her to close her eyes, but Maris gently insisted. Still she declined, and would have done so to the end, but for her gratitude to him and his companions because of the interest they showed in her affliction. She finally said: "Bueno noches," and passed within the house.

Thus Maris Rodyon was left alone to watch over the slumber of the good woman and of his friend, Bob Goodale, for he did not doubt that the mother, in the face of her crushing grief, would partially yield to the fatigue of the body. As for Bob, he would remain in dreamland until someone brought him out of it.

Maris gave his thoughts to his own situation. He remained seated on the bench of the ramada, where he was partly screened from the view of any one approaching that side of the house. An enemy might steal up

from the rear or either end of the dwelling, but it would do him no good. The building, as we know, had only two windows, each of which had been provided with panes of glass. The openings were so narrow that a small man could not worm his way through them. Though it was rash thus to make his home for a time in the exposed situation, Juan Morelos builded well. His castle could be entered only through the front door, and when that was closed and barred it resembled the massive walls themselves.

Guarding the entrance, therefore, was guarding the whole dwelling. Maris did not need to be told this fact, but he could not shut his eyes to another truth; no matter how vigilant his guardianship, he personally must be in peril so long as he remained under the ramada, for an enemy might readily steal around the corner of the building and pick him off before he was aware.

Why, then, did he not adopt the obvious plan of going inside and barring the door? He had only to do this to be safe against surprise or unexpected attack. But the youth had a strong belief that something would

be heard from either the absent husband or Corporal Bidwell before the night passed. It might be necessary for Maris to cover the flight of the father to his home with his little one, when a half minute's delay in opening the door would be fatal to both. So it was he decided to stay outside and be on the alert for whatever came.

CHAPTER V.

A CHANGE OF PROPRIETORS.

THE silence was like that of the tomb. The moon rode high in the sky, and the earth was bathed in its soft radiance. Maris Roydon sat on the bench under the ramada, with his senses keyed to the highest point. Peering out over the area of gentle illumination, he could trace the level stretch of sandy plain till it faded from sight. His vision did not reach to the foothills, nor, indeed, for more than a small part of the distance. He wondered and speculated as to what Corporal Bidwell was doing, and whether there was any hope for Juan Morelos and his Anita. But the youth had done little else than think and guess for hours, and must now await events.

By-and-bye he became sensible of a strange feeling. He could not account for it, unless it was the result of that myster-

ious power of which we know comparatively nothing, and which is sometimes referred to as the "sixth sense." It was a warning that someone was near him.

"I haven't heard a sound," he reflected, "nor can I see anything out there on the plain. It must be a whim and means nothing."

But he could not dismiss the prompting, which soon grew into conviction. One or more persons were in the vicinity.

He rose silently to his feet, with his rifle grasped. Stepping out from the ramada, he began a cautious circling of the dwelling. He moved so lightly that the listening ear of an Apache could not have detected his footfall. At the first corner he paused, holding the weapon with both hands, prepared to fire in the same breath that danger appeared.

It caused a shiver when he thought he might come face to face with a murderous warrior, or possibly several of them. Peeping round the corner, he saw nothing and passed until he made a second and a third turn. This brought him to the end of the house where was the window through which

the hostiles had fired, and from which was sent the effective reply of Señora Concha. One more turn would bring him back to the ramada.

He halted near the shattered window. The stillness continued, but as he gazed out on the plain he noted a shadowy, flickering movement, though still no sound came to the straining ears.

Standing thus the truth flashed upon him. Several Apaches had returned to carry away the body of their comrade, who had been shot from his pony hours before. The youth had been warned of their approach, though until now he had not seen anything to explain the singular revelation.

In a few seconds the flickering ceased. The bucks had picked up the lifeless form and borne it away. They were not likely to return, but Maris thought they might make the venture in the hope of getting revenge.

He walked to the bench and sat down, leaning his gun as before against the adobe wall beside him.

"If I am to be warned every time like that, I don't see that there is any call to use my eyes or ears at all."

With all his training during the past months, Maris Roydon overlooked one truth. He who essays the role of sentinel must keep sleep at a distance, through motion or action on his part. Maris did think of it, but kept his sitting posture because of two beliefs. He would expose himself to a lurking foe if he moved out from under the vines and paced to and fro, or even passed around the structure. More than this, however, he was absolutely sure he could stay wide awake the night through, without making use of such precaution. His feelings were too wrought up to permit slumber.

It was the mistake that has been made hundreds of times before, and doubtless will continue to be made forever. Leaning back, with shoulders against the warm, flinty clay, his senses left him, and he sank into a deep sleep.

He awoke with a start and a feeling of keen self-reproach. He did not move from where he was sitting except to lay his hand on the barrel of his rifle, but he looked intently here and there and listened. He saw and heard nothing to cause misgiving.

"What a beautiful sentinel I am;" he muttered, "if a single Apache had knew it, he could have stolen up, knifed me and slain Bob and the señora."

There was comfort in the knowledge that since Maris had been spared, no harm could have come to either of the others, but in the midst of his reflection a disquieting truth gradually forced itself upon his consciousness.

"I shouldn't have wakened so suddenly without some cause; what could it have been?"

Yielding to his vague uneasiness, he stepped to the door and listened. He heard the gentle breathing of Bob Goodale. All was silent in the direction of Concha's room. He was reassured, for if any harm had befallen her, his friend would not have been spared.

"I must have been roused by *something,* but there's no use of trying to guess what it was. I am so ashamed of my remissness that I won't tell Bob, which reminds me it must be nearly time to call him."

The agreement was to awake his friend at one o'clock when they would change places.

The moonlight was so vivid that when Maris held his watch turned right, he could plainly see the hands and figures.

"My gracious!" he gasped; "it is quarter past two!"

He stepped quietly through the door and softly pronounced the name of his comrade. This accomplished nothing, and he touched him with his foot. Bob mumbled something and then rose and followed his comrade outside.

"What time is it?" he asked when they came into the moonlight.'

"A little past the hour agreed upon."

"Why did you let me sleep longer than my turn?"

"What difference does it make? Bob, are you sure you can keep awake until morning?"

"Don't you think I can do as well as *you?*"

"There's not a doubt of it, but we can't be too careful."

"Have you seen or heard anything?"

Maris told of the party which had carried off the body of the buck shot by Señora Morelos.

"I suppose it would be safer for you to stay inside the house."

"Why then didn't you do so?"

"The outlook is clearer from the outside."

"Well, the thing for you to do is to sleep; in with you."

Thus the two exchanged places. Maris was a longer time in sinking into slumber, but finally succumbed. When he opened his eyes, it was growing light, and Bob stood smiling in the doorway. He reported that he had observed nothing unusual while on duty.

Now, that a new day was at hand, the two bathed with water from the jar, and attended to their toilet as was their rule when circumstances permitted.

"It is curious *she* doesn't wake," remarked Bob, when the two had passed into the sunlight again.

"She must be worn out and is sleeping soundly. Let us not disturb her; the poor woman needs rest, for her affliction is great."

Naturally the boys turned their attention toward the foothills, but neither could detect the slightest sign of life. Ponies,

Apaches and white men had vanished as utterly, so far as sight was concerned, as if the earth had opened and swallowed them. The day promised to be as fervid as those that had gone before, and like those to come for weeks and possibly months.

When a half hour had gone by without any sound from the interior, Maris shared the wondering curiosity of his comrade.

"It is strange she has not appeared; can it be any harm has come to her?"

Much disturbed, Maris stepped inside and called the name of Señora Morelos. He did so three times, with an increasing loudness of tone. There was no response nor any sound from her room.

He walked to the entrance and looked in. There was the couch, of crude make and evidently the work of Juan Morelos. It was meant for him and his wife, while at the foot was a small cot, where Anita had slept during the nights of her short life. No one could look into this primitive room, with the few garments hanging on the wall, without being struck by its neatness, which, as I have said, is the exception rather than the rule with those people. All the bits of glass

had been removed and the blanket which formed the chief part of the couch showed not a wrinkle.

But the apartment was empty.

Maris faced his companion.

"She has gone! What do you make of it, Bob?"

"I make that she is gone," he replied, "but *when* did she go?"

"Did you keep your place on the bench outside while I was asleep?"

"I never left the front of the house; she certainly couldn't have gone while I was on guard; how was it with *you?*"

"I may as well own up, Bob, that I fell asleep; that explains why I didn't wake you at the time agreed upon. She must have slipped out the door when I was dreaming."

"And she took pains not to disturb you."

"There!" exclaimed Maris; "that explains something which puzzled me; I came to my senses so suddenly that I knew some person had caused it, it must have been she as she passed out, though I didn't get my wits together till she was beyond sight."

"It strikes me, Maris, that we are in a mighty odd situation; we stopped here yes-

terday to make a call with Corporal Billy upon a family of Mexicans whom we had never seen or heard of before. Now, Billy and the whole family are gone; that leaves *us* in charge of this establishment."

"And how long shall we stay?"

"We are under promise to remain till to-morrow night, unless Billy turns up, or we are called away before. The first thing to do is to eat, for I'm confoundedly hungry."

They had brought in their guns and leaned them against the wall where they were within instant reach. A survey outside failed to show anything unusual, so they left the door open.

The boys began prowling around for food. In the small closet already alluded to, they found quite a supply of tortillas and frijoles. These had been cooked and were ready to eat, though the natives generally fry the former before partaking. They were just as palatable to the youths as when heated. In truth, they preferred them thus during the suffocating temperature.

"And the jar has got a good lot of water in it," added Bob, lifting off the wooden lid

and peeping into the vessel; "we can stand a pretty good siege."

"We shall not have anything like that to face; the hostiles haven't time to besiege abode dwellings, especially when they know the chief fun is sure to fall to the besieged. Captain Lawton and his scouts can't be a great many miles away."

"But there's a lot of Apaches between him and us. Can you see that the señora has helped matters by slipping off as she did?"

"She has made them worse; I hardly doubt that her husband and child have been killed by the Indians or are in their hands; she will be their next prisoner."

"Did she take her gun?" asked Bob, abruptly as the thought occurred to him.

"What a question! She wore a belt of cartridges, and we know she will put up a good fight if she gets half a chance, which I don't believe she will have."

"She couldn't sit down and wait in idleness while her heart was breaking."

"That's the mother of it; I hope for the best but fear the worst."

The youths placed a part of the food on

the little table and ate sparingly, for there was no saying how many more meals they would need before leaving the dwelling. The supply was scant, as is the rule where the climate is so unfavorable for the preservation of everything of the kind.

Bob remarked on the inconvenience and labor thus thrown upon the head of the household. He must have carried water all the way from the foothills, and since almost nothing was cultivated on the arid plain which inclosed his home, the food supply was brought a still greater distance.

"How any man and woman can content themselves here is more than I can understand," remarked Bob, when they passed outside to their seat on the bench. They ought to have made a pretence of cleansing the dishes, but excused themselves with the plea that water was too precious to be wasted in that manner.

"They were contented only because they intended to leave for good in a short time; their hearts have been fixed upon making their home in Hermosilla in their own Sonora. You may be sure they will do so, if they ever get the chance, no matter if the

hostiles run off with every one of the cattle now owned by Morelos.

"There are beautiful and lovely regions on the globe, and lots of others which can hold their own with our ideas of tophet. This is one of them—"

The disgusted Bob had not time to complete his remark, when he stopped abruptly. He, like his companion, had caught the sound of rifles. Through the pulsating air the reports seemed dull and distant but they needed no one to tell them the direction. They sprang to their feet and stared at the foothills.

A thin, bluish haze showed as it filtered from above the rocks and pines, but they saw nothing of men or animals.

"That means *fighting!*" exclaimed Maris, excitedly, "we ought to be there, for we are needed."

"I think the same," added Bob, as much stirred as his companion.

It was rash on their part, for there was no guessing what it all signified, and by venturing forth in this manner, they were liable to involve themselves in peril from which nothing could save them.

But without hesitation, Maris and Bob hurried across the hot plain toward the foothills, where stirring events were under way. At the suggestion of Bob, they took their saddles and bridles with them, despite the wearying work of doing so. They hoped the accoutrements might prove useful.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAMPAIGN.

HAVING come thus far in our story, it is proper briefly to turn aside and tell the facts of the last campaign against the ruthless Apaches.

From the hour that General Nelson A. Miles assumed command of the Arizona Department, he showed himself the wise, tactful and skilful leader, who grasped intuitively the difficult situation and made his preparations with consummate thoroughness. Secretary Stanton, the great War Secretary under Lincoln, rebuked the expression "organizing victory," but if the term was ever allowable, it applies to the work of Miles in the memorable campaign which brought safety and peace for the first time to the harried Southwest.

By direction of the government, he entered upon his duties in the opening days of

April, 1886. From the first he was warned by leading citizens that the task before him was impossible; the fiendish Apaches, fitted by nature and training to be the most fearful desperadoes that ever ravaged a country's frontiers roamed over a region larger than many of the States. It was broken by wild, precipitous mountains, stretches of arid plain and desert, and cursed by a climate that can be compared at certain seasons only to hades itself. Through this section of southwestern Arizona, New Mexico and northern Mexico, these dusky demons had swept at will. They were as merciless as so many jungle tigers, and terrorized hundreds of square miles, with a ferocity and daring that were never equalled elsewhere.

General Miles met all these objections with the quiet assurance that no soldiers on earth are the superior of our own. They were capable of doing all that the Apaches could do, and would do it with unsurpassable endurance and heroism. The principle which guided him was that no people or animals can withstand being hunted for days and weeks without cessation; that persistence is sure to win, and the miscreants could

be cornered and forced to surrender. That being effected, the renegades, with their women and children, should be removed so far eastward that not the remotest possibility of further harm from them would remain.

As to the celerity of movements by the hostiles we had the advantage of steam in moving troops, munitions and provisions. If the raiders could signal by means of fire and smoke, we could outwit them with the heliograph. Upon the request to General Hazen in Washington a corps of skilled officers and fine instruments were forwarded to Arizona. The vast region was blocked out and a network of communication established on high points of observation. The clear atmosphere of Arizona, and the lofty mountain peaks make it an ideal country for the heliograph. As has already been stated, thirteen stations in New Mexico and fourteen in Arizona were soon in operation. Thus the watchmen in charge of the instruments could signal over the heads of the marauding bands, whose movements were closely watched through telescopes and field glasses, and reported to headquarters.

Another important step taken by Gen-

eral Miles was the organization of a force to pursue the hostiles, after they should be driven over the border into Old Mexico. This was in accordance with his plan of giving them no rest. The selection was made with great care, and could not have been more fortunate. He chose as commander Captain Henry W. Lawton, Fourth United States Cavalry, whom he found at Fort Huachuca. The subsequent career of this officer proved him to be one of the most remarkable military leaders in the army.

Captain Lawton was as firm in his belief that the Apaches could be subjugated as was General Miles himself. While not unduly confident, and well aware of the wonderful endurance of the Apaches, he never weakened in his faith. Like Washington, during our colonial period, he believed in using the same methods as the enemy used; not only that, but he was sure those methods could be improved upon and surpassed.

Not only was Captain Lawton a skilful officer, absolutely without fear, but he was an impressive example of vigorous American manhood. He was six feet five inches in height, weighed two hundred and thirty

pounds, without an ounce of superfluous flesh. He was lithe, active and possessed herculean strength. In this respect, no man in the army was near his equal. Handsome of feature, quiet, blunt of speech, a man of deeds rather than words, his bronzed countenance glowed with pleasure at the prospect of the stirring work before him.

Another admirable selection from the officers at Fort Huachuca was Captain Leonard Wood, Assistant Surgeon, United States Army. He was a young Harvard graduate whom General Miles described as "a fair-haired, blue-eyed young man of great intelligence, sterling manly qualities and resolute spirit. He was also, perhaps, as fine a specimen of physical strength and endurance as could be easily found. He had a perfect knowledge of anatomy, and had utilized his knowledge of physiology in training himself and bringing every part of his physique to its highest perfection, and seemed to have the will power and energy to keep his own physical mechanism in perfect condition and activity." The subsequent career of General Wood is the best proof of the wisdom of General Miles in selecting him for

the important work. It may be said at this point that Lawton and Wood were the only two officers, who, entering upon the Apache campaign at the beginning, went through it without break to the end.

When all preparations were completed the indispensable need remained of finding out where Geronimo and his hostiles were. They were believed to be in the fastnesses of the Sierra Madres. Had they chosen to stay there, it would have taken one or two years to root them out, but with the reckless bravado they often showed, they opened the campaign by committing many outrages south of the Mexican boundry. This revealed their whereabouts and the campaign against them was begun.

After sweeping like a cyclone through northern Sonora, Geronimo and Natchez turned northward, and, in the latter part of April, re-entered American territory. They dashed up the Santa Cruz Valley, killing ranchmen and stealing stock. Thus they invaded a section farther west than where they had appeared for several years, but Captain T. C. Lebo, with his troop Tenth Cavalry, was instant to take their trail. He

chased them for two hundred miles and brought them to bay in the Pinito Mountains, thirty miles over the line in Sonora. In the brisk fight which followed the Apaches suffered severely.

It was during this vicious collision that Corporal Scott was so badly wounded that he sank down between the lines, unable to move or help himself. While the hostiles were firing upon him, Lieutenant Powhatan H. Clarke, graduated only a short time before from West Point, ran out, lifted the Corporal from the ground and brought him in safety to his own lines.

I am grieved to say that this gallant young officer was accidentally injured while bathing in the river near Fort Custer, Montana, and drowned in 1893.

There was no let up in pressing the campaign. The Indians retreated and their trail was taken up and followed by Captain Lebo, and later by Captain Lawton. The command of Captain Hatfield, Fourth Cavalry, caught the Apaches east of Santa Cruz, Sonora, captured their whole camp equipage and about twenty horses, the hostiles scattering like quail. Captain Hat-

field was afterward attacked by them. The fight was a desperate one, and the Americans suffered considerably.

Lieutenant Brown now took up the pursuit, and soon found the raiders had divided into two bands. The one heading north was intercepted by Lieutenant Brett, Second Cavalry, who followed them with untiring energy. It was June, and the whole country, except high up among the mountains, were throbbing with intolerable heat. The Indians plunged into the wildest mountains and forced their ponies until they gave out. Leaping from their backs they skurried into the valleys, stole other animals and resumed their flight. In order to follow them, the troops had to send their horses around the impassable heights and keep to the trail on foot. After climbing the precipitous walls, which were like the corrugated sides of a house, they slid and rolled and tumbled down the farther slope, saving their hands from blistering by keeping them off the metal parts of their weapons.

Nothing could stay the grim pursuit. How little we know of the tortures of a consuming thirst! Once the troops kept up the

chase for twenty-six hours without a halt, and for eighteen hours they could not obtain a drop of water. The awful sufferings of the men are shown by the statement of General Miles that many of them opened the veins in their arms in order to moisten their burning lips with their own blood!

Captain Lawton's command included thirty-five men of Troop B, Fourth Cavalry, twenty Indian scouts, twenty men of Company D, Eighth Infantry and two pack-trains. The animals attached to the latter, after traveling a few miles in the early hours of the day, became so heated that they had to stop. In June, fresh detachments of scouts and infantry took the places of those who were worn out, and in the following month the hostiles were driven south of Oposura. By this time the pursuers had traversed a distance of 1,400 miles over flaming deserts and rugged mountains Three times the raiders were attacked with such fury that they had to abandon their animals and flee in hot haste on foot. They called into play all their masterly woodcraft to throw Lawton off the trail, but never suc-

ceeded, for the hunters were the equal of the hunted in every respect.

When the cavalry gave out, infantry and Indian scouts replaced them. The iron-limbed soldiers reached the limit of human endurance, and only fourteen of the infantry were left. They toiled on until barefoot, when Lieutenant A. L. Smith and his cavalry relieved them.

During the four months' campaign, the pursuers traveled more than 3,000 miles, the tortuous trail crossing, recrossing, doubling times without number and leading through mountains that had never been traversed before by white men. In one week, scout Eduardy rode a single horse five hundred miles. The raiding and massacre covered a region four times as large as the state of Massachusetts. Three thousand troops on our side of the line and nearly as many in Mexico were engaged at different times in running down this band of desperadoes. The renegades under Geronimo and Natchez numbered less than forty, but they knew all the trails and water-holes, and having no baggage to impede them, were able for a long while to elude their followers.

In this tremendous task, the heliographic service was valuable beyond estimate.

Early in July, the Apaches were driven south of Oposura in Old Mexico. I have mentioned a favorite trick of theirs. When a party were hard pressed, they fell apart and each warrior continued his flight alone. Before thus breaking up they agreed upon some point where they were to come together again. It might be ten or twenty miles off, but the reunion was necessary, in order to continue their bloody raids. The pursuers, when they reached a place where this dissolution had occurred, selected one of the trails and held to it, knowing that sooner or later, it would lead them to the rendezvous.

I have thus brought down the principal events of that wonderful campaign for the conquest of Apaches to the time of the incidents recorded in the preceding chapters. Since Captain Lawton will have much to do with those incidents, I cannot forbear quoting the tribute of a correspondent of the Chicago *Times-Herald* to this remarkable officer:

"The papers have told of his long years

of services, of how he has worked himself up through the lieutenancies to his present rank, and of the training given him of more than a quarter of a century of experience; but of the gigantic size, the phenomenal strength and activity, the abnormal endurance, the utter fearlessness, and the inalienable picturesqueness of the man, not a word. I have the honor to know him well, and, since I like men whose basic manhood has not been utterly refined out of them I liked him.

"Lawton reminds me always of Scott's Norman baron, Front de Bœuf. He has better morals, of course, but he is as big as the giant slain by Richard of the Lion Heart, is as direct in his methods, and, in personal or general combat, every bit as savage. There is plenty of the primal man in him. What he thinks, he says. He has a strong sense of justice, but his temper is terrific, and he is not gentle. He requires of subordinates the utmost endeavor, and gets it. He asks no one to do work that he is not competent and willing to do himself. Naturally a leader, he goes first, and the more difficult

or desperate the undertaking the faster he goes. Under the gray granite slab which coves the moldering bones of a Confederate officer who sleeps on the magnolia-petalled uplands of Louisiana is an inscription: 'He never told his men to go on.' That will do for Lawton when he dies.

"He is fifty-five years old, and as springy as a youth. His capacity to go without food, drink or sleep is seemingly unlimited. He will keep his eyes open for a week at a stretch when necessary, and then walk, talk, eat, drink or fight a dozen men to a standstill. His only rule of hygiene is a tub in the morning. He has taken no sort of care of himself. Yet so splendidly was he endowed by nature that there is no perceptible weakening of his forces. Apparently he is as powerful and enduring as when I saw him first. That was more than ten years ago. He had completed one of the most remarkable feats of strength and perseverance chronicled in the long annals of the Anglo-Saxon race, but he was as fresh as a rose in the morning.

"He stood on the government Reservation at San Antonio surrounded by the

tawny savage band of Chiricahua Apaches whom he had hunted off their feet. Near him, taciturn, but of kindly visage, stood young Chief Natchez, almost as tall as he. In a tent close by lay Geronimo, the medicine man, groaning from a surplusage of fresh beef eaten raw. The squat figures of the hereditary enemies of the whites grouped about Lawton came only to his shoulder. He towered above them, stern, powerful, dominant—an incarnation of the spirit of the white man whose war drum has beat around the world. Clad in a faded, dirty fatigue jacket, greasy flannel shirt of gray, trousers so soiled that the stripes down the leg were barely visible, broken boots, and disreputable sombrero that shaded the harsh features burned almost to blackness, he was every inch a soldier and a man. To the other officers at the post the Indians paid no attention whatever. To them General Stanley and his staff were so many well dressed lay figures, standing about as a part of a picture done for their amusement; but the huge, massive man with the stubble on his chin had shown them that he was their superior on hunting grounds that were theirs by

birthright, and they hung upon his lightest word.

"For the tenth time Geronimo's band had jumped the San Carlos Reservation. The spring grass was two inches high, and the Indian lust for blood was awake. As usual, troops were started upon the perilous chase. For days they followed the trail over a country that God Almighty made in his wrath. Further and further into the vast solitudes they toiled. Volcanic crests reared about them. Lava tore the leather from their feet. They drank from springs that gushed thousands of feet above the valleys. They wandered in cañons so deep and dark that through the narrow ribbon of white far above them, the stars were seen at midday. They lived upon animals no wilder than the men they were pursuing, and scarcely more wild than they. Now and then, from a forest of pines far above them, a shred of blue smoke drifted on the furnace air, followed by the shrill of the bullet's wild singing. The horses long since had been left behind. The cavalrymen were on foot with Lawton at their head, his teeth hard set. 'We'll walk them down,' he told his sergeant when

the mountains were reached. He was walking them down."

Let us close with the sad sequel.

Lawton's fine work in Arizona made him a lieutenant-colonel. He showed conspicuous bravery and skill in Cuba, and going to the Philippines, carried through a hurricane campaign like that in the Southwest. On December 18, 1899, against the entreaties of his brother officers, he rode toward the firing line, and was shot through the lungs by a Filipino sharpshooter, living but a few minutes. He died a poor man, but the grateful American people secured his family against want by presenting the widow with the sum of a hundred thousand dollars.

CHAPTER VII.

THE "HIDDEN TREASURE."

AS Juan Morelos and his little daughter Anita kissed the mother good-bye, they were the picture of happiness. Although the air was already hot, they were used to it and did not mind. It was not always thus, and one cannot appreciate really good weather unless he has a taste of the other kind.

In her exuberance of spirits, the child ran ahead of her more deliberate parent who strode with even step toward the foothills. Months had passed since he had heard that the raiding Apaches were near his home, and he did not think any of them were within many miles. True they had passed that way in the past, as he had good cause to remember, but this plague could not go on forever.

Juan knew of the agreement between

Mexico and the American government by which no attention was paid to the boundary lines when the troops were running down the red men who showed mercy to no one. Surely times were improving and the parent need feel no concern for his loved ones and himself.

The ranchman carried his rifle, for that had become a habit with him, and the belt around his waist was full of cartridges. While drawing near the foothills, he scanned them, for that had also become a habit with him. The keen eyes saw naught to cause fear, and he did not restrain the delighted little one when she ran rods ahead and then impatiently awaiting his coming for a minute or two, wheeled and ran back again. Sometimes she managed to walk soberly for a little way at his side, with her tiny palm clasped in his, while she prattled of the hundred things that were flitting through her busy brain. He listened and answered her fittingly, for the words of no one could have given him keener pleasure.

"Anita grows more like her mother every day," he reflected, as he watched the dainty

figure that darted to and fro like a fairy; "she can never be more beautiful than was Concha, when I took her from among the score who were pining for her, but she will be as winsome, and attractive, and as good, for it is her nature. God is making her so.

"It would be a sin to keep her longer in this lonely place; her mother has taught her to read, and many other things, but she needs the company of other children; she must go to the schools in Hermosilla in our own country and be prepared for the sphere that awaits her above all others of her sex. How good in our Heavenly Father to give us such a child!" murmured the parent, with reverent gratitude.

The foothills began abruptly, and, a few minutes after leaving the blistering plain, the two were winding their way among and around the boulders, and rocks and obstructions. Nearly always they entered them by the same dimly marked path, but when a little distance beyond, they generally turned off to the right, or to the left, or they pushed farther into the solitude. Once Anita wearied her tiny limbs by climbing far up the mountain, which towered into the sky. She

had often watched and studied it from her home. She had come to believe that the peak reached all the way to Heaven, so that if she once got to the top, she could talk with the angels, and perhaps with God himself.

So, in answer to her pleadings, her father once took her on the long climb. It was so tiresome and her disappointment so keen that she never asked for a repetition.

Juan knew where he would be likely to find his cattle. Not far to the right was a large, but shallow spring. The moisture from this helped to irrigate the land through which the surplus flowed, and more pasturage was there than anywhere else. As he expected, he came upon the animals scattered over a considerable space, and so contentedly browsing that they did not so much as raise their heads to look at the arrivals.

The parent sat down on a boulder to rest himself, for the climb was rather trying. He lighted his pipe, and taking the lunch from his breast pocket laid it on the boulder beside him. There was no call to carry it with him when moving about. By-and-bye

Anita came back and sat with her hand resting on his knee. He stroked the abundant, silken hair, as black as the raven's wing.

"My dear, do you ever get tired?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, but as soon as I'm tired I forget about it. Once, though, I was awful tired."

"When was that?"

"When I went to Heaven," was the amazing answer.

"You mean when you tried to climb to the top of the mountain, but Heaven is a good way beyond that peak up yonder."

"How far?"

"So far that we shall never get in sight of it until we die."

"How long will it take you or me to go there when we die?"

"No time at all; just as soon as we close our eyes we shall wake up in Heaven."

"Oh, how I wish I could die."

"What! and leave your mother and me?" asked the father reprovingly.

"No; I want you both to die at the same time, then we can take hold of hands and

walk right straight to Heaven together. Won't that be splendid?"

"Yes," he replied, leaning over and kissing the upturned cheek; "nothing could be finer, but it isn't likely to happen; we shall probably die at different times, and the one who gets to Heaven first must wait to welcome the others, when God thinks best to call them."

Thus they chatted, when the little one was not running here and there, until the long sultry forenoon wore away. Then they sat down together and ate their lunch. He never brought more than the single meal, for he always expected to eat the others with his wife. When the afternoon was well advanced, he began to think of starting for home, more than a mile distant. The cattle seemed not to need the attention of anyone, and, in truth, it would have been just as well had he not come among the foothills at all.

"Oh, papa," suddenly exclaimed Anita, gently clapping her hands, as she stood in front of him and looked into his face; "we forgot something."

"What's that?"

"Our new house."

"What's got into that little head of yours?" he asked, with a smile; "what do you mean by talking about 'our new house?'"

"Don't you remember when I was here last with you? It's right there behind you."

He turned his head, and at the first glance understood the meaning of the child. Near at hand, was a rough cavern among the boulders. It was of irregular shape, not more than a dozen feet long, half as wide, and still less in height, with an opening as large as the end itself. Anita had stumbled upon it in her impulsive wanderings, and the father, by way of jest, had said they might use it for their new home, when they got tired of their old one.

As soon as she had pointed out the cavern she darted into it. He heard the tipping of the tiny moccasins, and now and then the muffled sound of her voice. He had resumed his old seat, when, after fifteen minutes or more absence, she popped into view again.

"It's so dark in there, it makes me blink when I come out where the sun is shining—

so you've been smoking again, papa," with the abruptness of childhood.

"What makes you say that? I smoked right after our lunch, but that was three or four hours ago; I haven't touched my pipe since."

"Ain't that funny?"

"Ain't what funny?"

"*Somebody has been smoking, for I smell it.*"

And the dainty nose sniffed several times in disgust, turning toward different points of the compass.

Juan Morelos's heart almost stood still. He caught the hand of his child and spoke so solemnly that she was scared. His voice was scarcely above a whisper, and he drew her so close to him that their faces almost touched.

"Listen, Anita! There are bad Indians near us; they have not seen us yet, but they may find us any moment; I want you to go into that new home, as you call it, and stay there till I come and take you away; do you understand?"

She nodded her head.

"Won't you come with me, papa?"

"No; not for a good while; you must wait there, no matter if it is a long time; will you be afraid when it grows dark?"

"No; for God will be with me."

"True, my darling; now hurry, for every second counts."

She slipped away and vanished through the broad opening.

At that moment, Juan Morelos caught the faintest perceptible odor of tobacco. It was rather the suggestion of a taint in the air. Like the mother bird which pretends to be wounded in order to draw the hunter from her young in the nest, the Mexican, stooping low, hurried a few paces from the hiding place of his child.

The smell in the hot atmosphere was gone. He could not tell from what point it came, but he knew enemies were close, and never was there greater need for care and woodcraft on his part.

An almost inaudible laugh struck his ear. He caught the direction and peeped from behind the massive rock in his path.

A procession of young Indian bucks was going down the side of the mountain, within fifty feet of where he crouched. Had they

dreamed of any one being near, he must have been discovered. He hardly breathed until they passed from sight behind the boulders.

"They intend to attack my home," was his thought, "but they will not find Concha unprepared. How quickly I should hasten to her help if I dared leave Anita, but," he added with a thrill of pride, "Concha knows how to hold them at a distance."

Making sure he was far enough to the rear to be invisible, he stealthily picked his course down the mountain side. So extreme was his caution that he soon detected the party again, and easily avoided discovery by them.

He was astonished. The whole ten in the brief interval had dressed the fantastic wreaths of twigs and scrubby undergrowth about their heads, and were stooping behind a boulder among the foothills. More than likely they had set out to attack the ranchman's home, when their plan was changed by sight of the three horsemen riding toward them.

The thought instantly came to Juan that he ought to warn the little party of their

He Saw the Horseman Halt.

peril, but to do so would draw the rage of the reckless young bucks upon himself and Anita. Before he could decide the question, he saw the horsemen halt, and the leader bring his rifle to his shoulder.

You know what followed. If there was a man in Arizona who exulted in the baffling of the murderous miscreants that man was Juan Morelos. When the youthful Apaches dashed out on the plain, he rose upright, grinned and chuckled.

"How rarely things turn out that way! Ah, if my people were as wise and brave as those men, the Apaches would leave us alone."

It was with supreme pleasure that he noted the action of the horsemen, as they rode to his home. His keen eyes told him his wife had signalled to them, and no doubt they would remain in the house until morning. He need give himself no more concern as to her safety. Four repeating rifles handled by as many brave defenders would stand off Geronimo and his whole band.

Always was Anita in his thoughts. He knew how distressed his wife would be, but he must bring no risk to the little one. So

long as she stayed in the cave she was safe, for none of the hostiles would think of searching there for any one. A tender thrill stirred him over the certainty that Anita would stay where she was until she perished from starvation or thirst before she would disobey him.

His obvious course as it seemed to him was to withdraw the "hidden treasure" and pick his way among the foothills until so distant in the growing obscurity that he could approach his home from another direction and be in no danger of discovery from the Apaches, who doubtless meant to remain in the vicinity, in the hope of securing revenge for what they had suffered.

Such would have been the action of Juan but for an unexpected and alarming interruption. The suffocating afternoon was drawing to a close, when he caught sight of the Indian horsemen approaching from the far side of his home. He carried no field glass, so he had to depend upon his unaided vision. He felt hardly a misgiving, when he saw the flashes of the guns and knew the Apaches were firing upon his dwelling. You know also what followed *that* attack.

That which startled Juan was the sight of the repulsed riders riding toward the spot where the young bucks had tried to ambuscade the three whites. They must have had some knowledge of the previous encounter, for they mingled with the youths, and for some minutes the chattering grunts told of angry words. The wounded Apache was helped from his pony and placed on the ground, where he leaned wearily back against a friendly boulder.

Juan did not dare linger in the vicinity. He had already run a desperate risk, and was still in imminent danger of discovery. In such an event, there could be no escape for him. He decided to return to the cave, take out Anita, hasten as far as possible from the accursed spot, and then make his circuitous approach to his own home.

The incidents narrated formed one of the most extraordinary episodes of that last memorable raid of the Apaches. This is the time to explain that which was not fully learned until nearly two years later, and it may be added that even then the discovery was in the nature of an accident.

Generals Miles, Crook, Colonel Maus and

other veteran campaigners have borne witness to the fact already mentioned, namely: the most and diabolical Apaches were the youths who had not yet reached manhood. Their burning lust for blood made them irrestrainable. When they grew older they would acquire some of the cunning, caution and prudence of their fathers, but until that period arrived, they were blind ravening beasts.

When Geronimo, Natchez and others started on their frightful raid, many youths begged to go with them. Sternly refused, they sulked and brooded and finally plotted together. Before the raid was three days old, ten of these ferocious youngsters started off by themselves. Among the precious party was a son of Natchez and one of Geronimo. It was the former who fell a victim to the markmanship of Corporal Billy Bidwell.

These furious bucks tried to keep clear of the adults, and for a number of weeks did so. There is no record of their deeds, but it is safe to say that some of the most shocking outrages were committed by them, though charged to the elder warriors. Nor can it

be known whether Geronimo and his leaders heard of the doings of the band, until on this summer day when a strange coincidence brought them together for the first time.

The hostiles had divided on the morning of the day of the affray, and Geronimo was with the party which attacked the home of Juan Morelos. With that strange fortune which seemed ever to attend this miscreant, he escaped unharmed, though had he been recognized by Señora Morelos she would have made sure of him.

When Geronimo and Natchez joined the bucks at the base of the foothills, there was the stormiest kind of session. The furious Natchez (who had shot one of his wives some time before) spurned the body of his son, and drawing his knife would have fallen upon the others, had not Geronimo restrained him. The famous medicine man griped his own son by the throat and would have finished him then and there, had not Natchez in turn stayed his hand.

The remarkable meeting ended in the order for the nine to make all haste back to the Reservation, without halting or turning aside at any point to attack the whites. The

youths were warned—and they knew the threat would be carried out—that every one who disobeyed the command would pay for such disobedience with his life, on the very first chance offered for such punishment. So the bumptious young warriors slunk homeward with their "tails between their legs."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RENDEZVOUS IN THE FOOTHILLS.

JUAN MORELOS took three steps from the angry group at the base of the foothills, when he stopped as suddenly as if he had heard the whirr of a rattlesnake at his feet. In truth he had heard something which was more terrifying than the warning of that hideous reptile.

At some point behind him, in the direction of the cave in which Anita was hiding, a soft, tremulous cry, like the suppressed hooting of an owl reached him. He knew on the instant that it came from the throat of an Apache. One and possibly a score of Indians had just arrived at the place.

The true explanation flashed upon him. You have been told that a favorite trick of a raiding party of those desperadoes is to divide, reuniting at some rendezvous miles from where the division took place. Geron-

imo's band had separated that forenoon, and by a strange coincidence, the meeting point was fixed at the spring in the foothills, where Juan and Anita had spent most of the day. The Medicine Man and his lesser number of raiders were on their way to the spot when they made the mistake of attacking the home of the Mexican, unaware that it held three defenders at the time, though they quickly learned the interesting fact.

The larger party was approaching from the east, and did not reach the rendezvous until night. Thus Juan found himself caught between two fires.

Had he been alone he could have escaped with little difficulty. The obscurity added to his chances, and none of the hostiles suspected the presence of a white man near them. He shifted a number of rods to one side, and thus passed out of what may be considered the zone of imminent danger.

Juan had a good knowledge of woodcraft and his surroundings favored him. He managed to keep trace of the doings of the band without revealing himself, but more than once he came within a hair of spoiling everything.

The young bucks having departed, the adults, leaving their ponies behind, came up the slope to where the signals which they answered were first heard. Thus some forty persons, including a number of squaws, came together in the gloom close to the cave which held Anita Morelos.

Juan gained only a glimpse of the shadowy forms, but he never heard so much talking among a group of red men. There were angry accusation and fierce words. Suddenly two bucks came together with the fury of tigers. Their companions let them fight it out, and the finish speedily came. The combatants went to the ground striking savagely at each other. By-and-bye one rose to his feet, but the other never imitated him.

Directly after a light shone out in the darkness. A fire had been started in the deep hollow near the spring. Pine and spruce branches were gathered and flung in a heap. On one side of the pile was a towering rock, which extended backward more than twenty feet. The opposite wall was that of the cave in which Anita was awaiting the return of her parent.

"They will encamp there for the night," was the agonizing thought of Juan; "some of them will notice the cave; God protect my little one, for she is in great peril."

Two rifle reports sounded in quick succession a little way to the south. It was in that direction that the cattle had strayed when the sun was setting. They were through cropping the scant grass and herbage, and had lain down for the night.

"They have begun killing my herd, but I care naught if they spare Anita," was the prayer of the parent.

All this time, as will be seen, it would have been easy for Juan Morelos to secure his own safety. He might have withdrawn from the dangerous neighborhood and reached his home on the sandy plain, a mile distant, without harm to himself, but not for an instant could he think of abandoning her who was the apple of his eye to him.

He was certain that no matter what took place, Anita would not betray herself. She had been told to stay in the cave until her parent came for her, but the torturing thought was that she would not be left to herself. It was not possible for the yawning

gap in the rocks to elude notice. What more natural that one of the warriors or squaws should explore the opening? Quite likely some of the party would spread their blankets within and lie down to sleep till morning.

Fortunately for Juan's peace of mind he did not see that which took place later in the evening. He would have bidden good-bye to discretion had he known of it and brought destruction upon himself and child.

He read aright the meaning of the two shots which sounded dully in the pulsing hush of the night. Two of his beeves had been killed. Immediately several of the hostiles ran out in the darkness. A few minutes later they came back bearing huge pieces of meat, dripping with blood. The animals had been slashed apart in the rough fashion of those people, and enough was brought into camp to furnish a meal for all.

Some pretence of cooking followed, but at the best it was no more than a bare scorching. Some of the squaws snatched portions from their husbands or others, held the crimson hunks over the blaze for a minute or two and then fell to devouring them

like so many wolves. There was yanking to and fro, vicious words, angry blows, and gorging as if only a few seconds were at the disposal of the feasters. Few sat down, but dashed here and there, clawing, jerking away the pieces from those who had robbed them a moment before. Altogether it was a scene which could have been equalled nowhere else except among a lot of famishing wild beasts.

Anita would have speedily fallen asleep had the circumstances been different, but she could never forget the face of her father, nor his impressive manner when he told her to go into the cave and wait for him to come for her. She had heard her parents speak so often of the Apaches and their crimes, that, young as she was, she had an intelligent idea of their ferocious nature. The sounds on the outside of her "new home" left no doubt in her mind of who were so near.

She rose to her feet and stepped softly to the rear, not pausing till she was checked by the wall at the further end. There she sat down with her back against the stone, and waited for whatever might come. She

could get no farther from the entrance, nor was there any way of hiding herself.

"It's too bad," she thought, "that papa didn't put a door there, so I could lock it, and shut out those bad folks. I wonder when he will come for me?"

All was blank darkness around her. She could follow the dim, jagged outlines of the entrance, because of the yellow glow which came from the fire, but for a good while no one seemed to notice the natural opening among the rocks.

She was frightened by the angry words and the shuffling to and fro. Though she could not understand anything said, she knew the people were quarreling, and when people quarrel they do not care what they do.

All at once the sides of the rough door stood out more plainly. Someone had set out to make a closer examination. A squaw bearing a torch in one hand stopped in the opening, held the brand aloft, and stooping over, peered in as if trying to scrutinize every inch of rock.

The sight was so frightful that Anita clapped one hand over her mouth to keep

from crying out. There was little or no difference between the dress of the Apache warriors and their women. The one whose serpent-like eyes seemed to pierce the gloom wore her long, coarse, black hair dangling about her shoulders, a red handkerchief bound about the head in the shape of a turban, and a soiled blue shirt clasped at the waist by a girdle, and moccasins. All that she lacked was a cartridge belt and one of the Springfield rifles to make her attire the same as that of the men.

The bronzed face was that of a squaw in middle life. It showed many wrinkles, and the corners of the mouth were drawn down like those of Geronimo and many other Apaches. It added a harshness to the features that were already repellant to the last degree. One prominent cheek bone was ridged by a big scar, which reached to and gave a twist to the knobby nose. Anita noticed a peculiar drawing back of the lips, as is sometimes shown by a snarling beast when in a rage. The American Indian has always been noted for his superb molars, but the squaw had several missing from her

upper jaw, a defect which added to her repulsiveness.

Had she taken one or two steps into the cave she must have seen the tiny form huddled at the further end, with its scared eyes upon her, but providentially she did not do so. She may have thought some reptile had taken shelter there.

As the squaw stood with the torch smoking above her head, the face of a second Apache suddenly showed at her elbow. He was probably her husband. He spoke in an angry voice, and, muttering a reply, she turned about and the two went away together. Once more Anita was alone in the impenetrable darkness.

"I'm going to stay awake just as long as they keep me here," she said, resolutely; "I don't care if it is for a good many days and weeks."

In order to do her waiting with more comfort, she shifted her sitting posture to that of a prone one. True the bed was hard, but she had slept on the bare floor at home many a time. Having thus adjusted herself, she straightway sank into a sweet, dreamless slumber, which lasts a good while.

Meanwhile, Juan Morelos found his situation trying to the last degree. Knowing nothing of Anita's narrow escape from discovery, he believed she was likely to be found at any moment. The Apaches had settled near the spring, evidently with the purpose of staying till morning. All had done so much traveling for the past few days, and, indeed, for weeks, some on foot and a few on horseback, that they needed rest. The only prospect of their early departure was the arrival of one of their scouts with word that the white men and their Apache allies were hurrying toward the same point.

It has been said that the hostiles called into play every device they knew to throw their pursuers off their trail. Before entering upon any special section—such as a range of mountains or long stretch of level plain, it was carefully reconnoitered. Their most skilful scouts went far in advance, others covered the flanks, while still others hovered at the rear, all on the alert for sight of their relentless pursuers. The wonder is that in the face of these myriad precautions,

the soldiers and friendly scouts were ever able to get within sight of them.

Juan began a guarded withdrawal from the vicinity of the camp. He was perilously near, for some of the members were continually coming and going, and were likely to discover him. Even in the act of stealing farther back, he believed for a moment he had been detected. The odd grunting noise with which he had become familiar long before sounded so near his elbow that he grasped his gun and peered around to make sure of his aim. He was well beyond the circle of light thrown out by the fire and saw nothing.

He crouched low and listened. He heard the grunting words again, followed by a similar sound from some person near the first. Two Apaches were talking, and were unaware of the presence of the white man.

Little fear of Juan betraying himself after such a warning. The moon had not yet risen, though he knew it would soon be due.

The singular conversation consisted of no more than half a dozen sentences on the part of each, when the soft rustle of foot-

steps showed the couple were leaving the spot. Their course took them somewhat around the Mexican, and at one point they came between him and the blaze. He saw the forms as if stamped in ink against the yellow background, and then they mingled with their comrades.

Feeling a little more secure, since he was further removed from the group, Juan spent the next half hour in studying them. He had never seen Geronimo or Natchez to know him, though he was quite sure both were with the band. Doubtless his eyes rested upon each more than once during those trying minutes, but he did not identify either.

As he thus stood, the watcher counted eighteen men and eleven squaws. He saw no children, for the hostiles were becoming too hard pressed to handicap themselves with such impediments. They started out with a number, but they had been sent back to the Reservation. Men and women were girded for the fray, and we all know upon what a chase they led their pursuers.

Of the warriors, two-thirds were seated on boulders, smoking pipes, and occasion-

ally speaking with one another. Three were lolling on the ground, and three more were stretched out as if asleep. They were not afraid thus to indulge so long as their own vigilant scouts were on duty. The slovenly squaws were scattered here and there, nearly all holding some uncouth posture on the ground. One of the men who appeared to be slumbering suddenly sat upright and stared about him by the light of the fire upon which sticks had been thrown by two of his comrades before they also lay down.

This warrior was looking for his better half. It must have been the eye of affection which identified her where all females looked alike, for there was no hesitation on his part in rising to his feet, stepping across and administering a kick with his moccasin which tumbled her several feet away. She did not stir or look around. She must have been used to such treatment.

The next kick was so vigorous that she was driven against one of the rocks. That awoke her, and she gazed inquiringly at her lord and master to learn what he wanted.

He didn't want anything. It was only a playful way he had. As his gaze met hers, his

swarthy face displayed a grin. She grinned answeringly, and then quietly resumed her couch on the bare earth, taking care to lie down on the extreme edge of the camp. He did not follow her and she was content. So no doubt was he.

As the night advanced the moon rose, shedding a light that was treacherous and uncertain. Only here and there did its rays touch the ground among the foothills. The firs and spruce at the higher altitudes interfered, and the rocks and boulders cast deep shadows among the surroundings.

With the increased though uncertain illumination, the watcher felt he ought to withdraw still farther from the camp of the Apaches. It impressed him as singular that with the weather so hot, the first should be kept going, after its need had passed. The evening meal was over, and they were not likely to eat again before morning, when they could readily draw upon their abundant larder.

By-and-bye that which he expected took place. The wood that had been gathered was all burned, and no more was brought in. Gradually the flames smouldered until only

a keen eye could discern the forms stretched between the rocks where the fire had been kindled for the purpose of preventing it being seen at a distance. We know that Maris Roydon and Bob Goodale from their place at the front of the adobe house saw not the first twinkle of the blaze that burned for hours.

A certain comfort, or, rather, lessening of anguish came to the parent as the hours slipped by. Anita certainly had not been discovered in her hiding place. Nothing was more evident than that the opening had been seen by some of the Apaches. Their failure to explore it showed the slight interest it roused in them. They would try nothing of the kind while the darkness lasted.

But what of the morning? In the bustle and hurry of preparation, and the eating of another meal before resuming their flight, nothing was more natural than that some of the band should peep into the cave. When the sun shone the first look, as he believed, would reveal Anita, for although he had never examined the place, he was sure the

broad entrance would admit so much light that concealment was out of the question.

While these thoughts were torturing him, a strange sensation gradually took possession of Juan Morelos.

"*I'm not alone,*" he suddenly reflected; "someone is near me, though he has made no sound and I can see nothing of him."

It was a strange conviction that came over him, and the strangest feature of it lay in the fact that it was true.

CHAPTER IX.

"BETRAYED BY A FRIEND."

THROUGH the tense stillness came the soft words: *"Amigo Juan."*

"Que es su nombre de Usted?" (What is your name?) instantly asked Morelos in reply.

From the shadow of a huge rock rose the form of a man, who came noiselessly forward.

"I've used up all the Spanish I know," he said, "if you can't talk American we'll have to use signs. I'm Corporal Bidwell, and I know you are Juan Morelos."

"I talk your language a little," said the Mexican, with only a trace of accent.

As you have surmised, Morelos was a man above the usual station. While his wife was ignorant of English, he had spoken it for years.

"Bully!" said the pleased Corporal;

"the first thing for us to do is to move further from the camp of our red brothers, but, tell me, where is your little girl?"

"She is alive, thank God, but in great peril."

That was enough for the moment, and the Corporal cautiously led until they were two hundred yards from the point of their meeting. Bidwell shaped his course to the base of the foothills, and near the edge of the plain.

The need of this extreme care was self-evident. When the raiding Apaches went into camp, they neglected no precaution. Their guards were out in every direction. The delicate situation of the Mexican was proved by his discovery at the hands of Corporal Bidwell. While spying about the camp, the American became aware of another person doing the same thing. His first thought was that the man was an Apache, but it did not take long to learn the truth. Aware as he was of the curious absence of Juan Morelos, he was looking for him more than for any one of the raiders.

When at last the two reached a point where they were safe from detection, the

Mexican told his story, with which we are familiar. Corporal Billy listened with absorbed interest. Then he in turn related his experience after the collision with the young bucks who had made their little blunder.

"And it was Señora Concha who shot the Apache from his horse?" asked the husband, with a quiver of pride in his voice.

"She did it before any of us knew what she was driving at; she walked into her bedroom and let fly through the window."

"It is just like her! No one can shoot better than she."

"She doesn't need to shoot any better, for she hits what she p'ints her gun at, and none can do better than *that*. You needn't worry about *her*."

"I'm not worrying; I am sorry because I had no way of telling Concha that Anita was yet alive, though in dreadful danger, but I knew no harm could come to her mother, especially when she had the company of so many good friends."

"And two of 'em will stay with her till the flurry is over, but you speak true when you say your child is in great danger, for the

Apaches are all around her. When daylight comes they are sure to find her."

"And what can *we* do?" asked the despairing father.

"It's mighty hard to tell; we must think it over."

And sitting down, the two talked in voices that could not have been heard ten feet away. The situation may be summarized:

Geronimo and his hostiles were among these foothills, at the base of a lofty range of the Sierra Madres. Somewhere beyond were Captain Lawton and his men on the trail of the raiders. He had his scouts reconnoitering in front, while the Apaches kept their equally vigilant guards on the watch for their pursuers. It was aboriginal brain against aboriginal brain with the chances even.

The faint hope of Corporal Billy and his companion was that their friends would reach the spot before daylight and attack the hostiles. If they did so, the raiders would scatter like so many quail. Their abrupt flight (they had long since become accustomed to such flights) would save

Anita Morelos, for there could be no stopping to make explorations.

But Lawton might be a mile or ten miles, or even further back on the trail. If he did not arrive until sunup, leaving the hostiles to take their own time in breaking camp, Anita's discovery was certain. Some of the prowling braves or their squaws would be sure to peer into the cave where the little one was hiding.

Sitting thus, and talking together as the moon soared into the heavens, and the night wore away, more than one desperate scheme was discussed and given up. That which Corporal Billy thought over for a long time, and was once half disposed to try was thus stated by his friend:

"Let us bring Concha and your two companions from my home; each has a rifle and knows well how to use it. There will be five of us; we shall make aloud outcry and open fire from one or two points upon the camp; the hostiles will think their pursuers have arrived; they will scatter among the mountains. That will make Anita safe, for we can rescue her and flee to my home. The Apaches will not linger to attack us, and we

need not fear double their number if they do so."

As I have said, this daring proposal commended itself at first to Corporal Bidwell who had taken part in so many forlorn hopes that he felt the joyous thrill which comes only to the truly brave man, at the promise of another test.

But as he coolly turned the proposal over in his mind he saw that it not only must fail, but would destroy every one who took part in it on the side of the assailants.

In the first place, the chances were a hundred to one that the five persons concerned could not come together for the wild attack without being discovered by some of the guards on duty in the neighborhood of the camp. Being then cut off from the adobe house which was as strong as a fort of stone, Geronimo and his bucks would destroy or capture and torture to death every one of the whites.

"If they had no guards out," said Billy, "we might start a hullabaloo that would work, but as it is, it won't do."

Señor Morelos could not deny the truth of the words. His love for his child warped

his judgment, and he was wise in listening to the veteran who had so curiously become his ally.

It was a night of strange events. The two were seated on the ground a goodly distance from camp, speaking in whispers, when the keen-eyed Corporal suddenly said:

"Sh! someone is coming!"

"I hear nothing," replied his companion.

"Nor do I, but I *see* somebody; he's right there in front and if we don't get out of his path, he'll walk over us."

At first there was only a blur in the direction of the house, but it quickly took the form of a person, who, as the Corporal had said, was approaching them.

Suddenly Morelos sprang to his feet and emitted a soft, tremulous whistle. Billy Bidwell hastily rose but held his peace. Evidently it was his part for the moment to look on and wait.

As the faint signal fluttered on the night air, the one who was coming abruptly stopped. Juan repeated the call and made two or three steps forward. At that the other broke into a run and hurried toward him. The Corporal had already discovered

that it was a woman, and he knew who she was.

Concha carried her rifle in one hand, but that did not prevent her from clasping her arms about her husband's neck and sobbing: "Anita! Oh, my, Anita! Where is she?"

"She is alive, but calm yourself, beloved."

Had he not supported her in his strong arms she would have fallen to the earth.

He gently helped her to sit down, while he placed himself on one side, Corporal Billy doing the same on the other.

"It ain't time for me to put my oar in," he reflected; "I'll give them the middle of the stage for a few minutes; but this *is* a bully mixup."

Corporal Billy was shrewd. He waited till a lull came in the conversation between husband and wife, when, through the former, he had a little talk of his own with the woman.

"What did the two young men say when you spoke of leaving them?"

"I did not tell them."

"What were they doing when you left?"

"He whom you call 'Bob' was asleep on the floor inside the house."

"Where was the other?"

"Sitting on the bench in front, keeping guard."

"Did he not speak when you came out of the house?"

"No; he did not seem to see me."

"Ah! that is enough," chuckled the Corporal, who added to himself, "the rascal was asleep. As matters stand, it don't make any difference, but won't I roast him when we meet?"

The striking mentality of this woman was shown a few minutes later when she made the very proposal her husband had offered to Corporal Bidwell, to the effect that the youths should be brought from the house and the five should make a furious attack upon the hostile camp. She hoped that in the confusion thus produced the Apaches would dash off in headlong flight and her Anita be saved. When her husband pointed out the hopelessness of the plan, she assented without protest.

Her next proposal was as original. It was that the Corporal should take the back

trail until he met the white men, tell them of the camp and hasten their attack upon it. Alas! this promised no more than the other wild scheme. Captain Lawton needed no hurrying; Corporal Billy with all his skill could not trace a course so as to meet the pursuers. Not knowing where to look for them, he might pass a hundred feet to the right or left without suspecting it.

"We must await the will of Heaven," said the mother, resignedly.

The course taken by the two men in withdrawing from their perilous nearness to the camp of the hostiles was opposite that of the cattle. Having finished their grazing for the day, the animals had lain down, some still chewing their cuds while others were sleeping, unaware of the doom that hung over them. Although the Corporal said nothing, he knew what would follow, in case the hostiles were not assailed by their pursuers: they would kill enough cattle to furnish them with a good meal, after which in their impish wantonness they would shoot every one that remained. They had done this many times in their flight through Arizona and Sonora, ruining scores of ranch-

men who managed to escape with their lives. If Morelos considered such a calamity as likely to befall him, it gave him no present concern, for all his anguish was over the little one in the cave.

"She wonders why I come not," he said in a broken voice to the mother, who gently answered:

"She feels no wonder for she knows the reason; remember that though Anita is young, there is no brighter child in the world."

"True, Concha, and none sweeter; she is an angel."

"Remember, too, that her fears do not keep her awake as ours do us; she has fallen asleep long ago, and will not open her eyes until daybreak comes."

"And not even then," added the father, with a wan smile, "for she loves to sleep late in the morning."

"There will be much noise about her and she will need food."

"No more than we and *we* do not need it."

Three separate times Corporal Bidwell, while seated on the ground, thought he heard the stamp of a hoof. He spoke to

Morelos, who replied that he had not noticed it.

"You were so interested in what you and your wife were saying that you didn't listen as closely as me; stay where you are while I look around."

With the utmost stealth he made his way among the rocks and boulders to a point but a few rods distant, but still among the foothills.

"This must be about the spot," he reflected, crouching behind one of the screens that were always near, "but I don't see anything."

The thought had hardly taken shape, when the soft thud sounded more clearly. It was to the left, and making his way thither, he came upon a surprise. The pony which had alarmed him was his own. The animal recognized his master, who went forward and patted his neck, speaking soothing words through fear that he might whinney. He did not, and the horses belonging respectively to Maris Roydon and Bob Goodale were lying on the ground within a few feet.

"I didn't expect *this*," muttered the

astonished Corporal; "I don't understand why some of the redskins haven't found you. They'll be pretty sure to do so in the morning and that'll be good-bye to us. I'd sell all three of you mighty cheap just now if I got a chance."

A still greater surprise came within the next minute. The Corporal was talking in his guarded way to the ponies, when an Apache warrior came out of the gloom, as noiselessly as the passing shadow of a cloud.

He walked erect, made no attempt to hide his approach, and did not halt until within two or three paces of the white man. When he checked his advance he was standing where some of the moonlight fell upon his head and shoulders.

Corporal Bidwell had instinctively laid his hand on his revolver, and was in the act of drawing the weapon, when he was saluted.

"Howdy?"

And then, as the expression goes, you might have knocked Corporal Bidwell down with a feather.

The Apache standing before him was Arak.

I am sure you haven't forgotten the friendly scout—him of the sullen visage, whom the Corporal and his young friends set down as one of the worst of his race, but who twice saved the life of Bob Goodale, afterward feeling abundantly rewarded when the beneficiary delivered enough currency in his hands to buy a big lot of mescal.

Billy Bidwell knew from the first that Arak was one of the scouts enlisted in the United States' service by General Miles, who was not willing to go as far as General Crook and employ scores of them. The young men had come in contact with the grum Apache many times, for they took special pains to show their good will toward him. While he was offish, none the less he was proud of their friendship.

"Where the mischief did *you* come from?" asked the astonished Corporal, but as he propounded the query in English and Arak couldn't speak the tongue, he did not reply. The interview would have been embarrassing, had it not occurred to Bidwell that the Apache possessed some knowledge of Spanish. Billy crooked his finger in front of his face as an invitation for the

other to follow him. He grunted and obeyed. A brief walk and the visitor was conducted into the presence of the amazed Morelos and his wife.

The Corporal explained the situation so far as he knew it, which involved little more than a certification of the character of Arak, whose status was made clear. Then the Mexican opened a limping conversation in the Spanish tongue. Arak could talk little, but he understood what was said to him.

The scout brought thrilling news. Captain Lawton and his command were only a little distance away and would soon attack the camp. Arak was one of his advance scouts, who had reached this place in the dusk of evening. Gaining some knowledge of what had occurred—though he did not know all—he walked out over the plain with the intention of warning Morelos and his family of their danger, but was soon convinced they had no cause to be alarmed. So he withdrew after coming within sight of Maris and Bob who never dreamt of his identity.

The skilful scout was accompanied by another, who hurried back over the trail to

inform Captain Lawton of the location of the hostiles. Arak stayed to keep watch so far as he could of the camp that he might be able to trace the raiders if they broke away before the arrival of the pursuers. When we remember the wonderful woodcraft of Arak we can understand how it was he located Corporal Bidwell and Morelos and his wife without anyone of the three suspecting he was near.

None of the party owned a watch, and it may be said none needed one. Two members at least could tell the hour almost unerringly by day or night.

Corporal Bidwell looked off over the plain in the direction of the home of the ranchman. The superficial observer would have seen nothing unusual, but he observed signs of approaching day.

"Ask him whether the night is not nearly over," said he to Morelos, who put the question to Arak. The Apache, instead of following the vision of the white man, scanned the foothills and the mountains to the eastward. It was only for an instant when he answered.

"He says day is at hand," explained Morelos.

"I was sure of it," commented the Corporal.

Suddenly Arak faced the Mexican and began talking rapidly. Morelos listened for a minute and shook his head.

"He is talking in Apache," explained the señor; "why does he do that? I can't understand a word he is saying."

"Tell him so in Spanish."

The Mexican spoke slowly and carefully, using the plainest words. Arak would not change his tongue. He acted as if offended, and though he must have understood what was asked of him he showed no evidence of it. Finally he paused, turned his face to the Corporal and said something. Billy smiled and also shook his head.

"Don't try any of your lingo on me; sometime when I have a little leisure Maris Roydon is going to teach me Spanish, but I don't hanker after Apache."

To the astonishment of the two men, Arak now wheeled and plunged in among the foothills, quickly disappearing from sight.

"How do you account for that?" asked Morelos.

"I can only guess it. He doesn't like it because the señora is with us; he doesn't know what a fine shot she is or he wouldn't object, but he has gone to join in the attack on the Apache camp."

"And what does he expect *us* to do?"

"Stay where we are; it ain't exactly according to the laws of war that I should hang back when fighting is going on and I don't like it myself, but if you'll allow, I must say it will be better that the señora should not go any nearer the camp."

"Perhaps she will not do so, but it depends upon circumstances; you cannot expect her or me to remain idle, while our child is in peril."

"Not unless you add to the child's safety by doing so—"

At that instant the whinney of a horse cut into the stillness, with startling loudness.

The hostile Apaches were warned, and it was the irony of fate that the fatal notice was given by Corporal Billy Bidwell's pony instead of one of their own animals.

CHAPTER X.

ALAS!

CORPORAL BIDWELL was never more enraged in his life. It was in the order of events that the Apache burros at the Devil's Backbone should warn their masters of the approach of Lieutenant Maus and his scouts, but for such warning to be conveyed by the Corporal's own pony was intolerable.

In his anger he snatched out his revolver with the intention of shooting the disloyal brute, but restrained himself. More important business was on hand, and the report of the weapon was likely to add to the mischief already done. He replaced it.

"Stay here," he said to Morelos and his wife; "you mustn't mix in this."

He ran in the direction of the camp of the hostiles, on the alert for a chance to join in the attack.

The Apaches had become accustomed to these whirlwind assaults. The whinney of the horse had hardly pierced the stillness, when every buck and squaw had leaped to their feet. With such admirable skill had the trailers threaded their way to the spot that they had not been discovered by any of the scouts on guard. But for that fatal warning, the hostiles a few minutes later would have been at the mercy of their assailants, who had followed them so persistently for hundreds of miles over plains and through mountains.

The camp fire had smouldered so low that it threw out no illumination. The few embers gleamed among the ashes like the baleful eyes of some demon. Shadowy figures leaped to their feet as if the ground upon which they had been lying had suddenly turned red hot. There was no time to look after the horses only a few rods away; the most that could be hoped for was the escape of their owners. As they darted off in the gloom the troops and scouts dashed forward and began firing.

Morning had fully come. The flashes of guns showed, here, there and manywhere.

The assailants acted on the Donnybrook principle of hitting at a head wherever it showed itself. Nor did the raiders confine their efforts to that of seeking shelter and escaping by flight. This was the kind of fighting to which they were accustomed, and they demonstrated that it was no child's play to attack them.

Private Cooke caught a glimpse of a sinewy Apache who bravely tried to cover the retreat of his companions. As he bounded to his feet, he stood still with his Springfield rifle ready for instant use. From a little way on his right, a gun flashed and the redskin felt the thrilling twinge in his arm. Confident that he had gotten his man, the soldier bounded forward, but was met by a blaze almost in his eyes, and he went down without an outcry.

Glaring around in the obscurity, the Apache waited for another chance. It came before he was ready for it. The second trooper who fired was cooler than his comrade had been, and the Apache with a wild cry leaped several feet in the air and sprawled on his face.

The dropping shots were coming from

twenty different points. Some were high up among the rocks, others from lower points, while Captain Lawton with a score of spirits as brave as himself was trying to work around to the rear of the hostiles and cut off their escape. Had he been given a few minutes more, nothing could have prevented his success, but the raiders were quick to see their danger and gave way. The squaws and most of the warriors had already fled, Geronimo and Natchez leading. The reports of guns became less frequent, and the pursuers gathered to hear the decision of their leader.

An aimless pursuit of the hostiles was likely to be more dangerous to the pursuers than to the fugitives, who had the advantage of a familiarity with the wild region. For years they had found a secure retreat in the Sierra Madres and their many spurs.

Not all of the trailers, however, came together in the deserted camp. Among those who pushed the fierce pursuit were Corporal Bidwell and Arak. Without any planning on the part of either, the two suddenly came together within a hundred yards of camp

and at the moment when the vigor of the chase was abating.

"I guess I'll have to take an hour off and learn to jabber in Apache," was the conclusion of the Corporal, when he found himself in the company of him of the sour visage and loyal heart; "it would come in handy if we could understand each other."

The situation was one in which signs and gestures did much to make clear their mutual meaning. They had halted and were standing side by side, glancing searchingly around them in the effort to decide the best thing to do.

Suddenly Arak raised his gun, but instead of firing abruptly swung the arm holding the weapon with such violence across the breast of the Corporal that he sat down with a grunt and a bump. In the same instant, there was a flash from a boulder hardly a rod in advance and the bullet whistled over the head of Bidwell. His escape from being killed could not have been narrower. Arak had observed that the gun barrel from behind the boulder was pointed at his comrade. The fraction of a second in

sweeping the white man off his feet would have been fatal.

With a smothered exclamation Arak bounded forward. Instead of passing around the obstruction he leaped upon the top, made one tremendous spring and came down on the other side, where he found himself face to face with a giant buck of his own race, who had just fired his gun at the white man.

The two were members of the same branch of the Apaches, and, in truth, had once been comrades on one of the fiercest raids in which those merciless demons ever indulged. But for the occasion they were the deadliest of foes. The hostile was filled with rage unspeakable that one of his own people should join hands with his hereditary enemies; Arak was fired with enthusiasm because Uncle Sam paid him a few dollars for his services.

The situation did not call for firearms. Each instinctively dropped his rifle and and whipped out a formidable hunting knife.

"Arak is a dog that fights with the white-

men," growled the other, staring savagely at the scout.

"Ochenah is a squaw and coward who hides behind a rock and shoots at the white man, who does not see his danger."

Regarding this burst of refined irony, it is only fair to Ochenah to say that Arak had done the same thing many a time. In a fight of the nature described, the method was as popular among the whites as among the red men.

But Ochenah showed his lack of prudence in delaying matters to indulge in this cross-fire of recrimination. He ought to have proceeded to business the instant Arak came within reach. Ochenah was one of the most terrific fighters among the Apaches. Many campaigners of those days will recall him as a wretch without a redeeming virtue. Moreover, he was lacking in a certain courage which his companions often displayed.

But the woful blunder Ochenah made was in forgetting the white man whom he had come so near shooting. Even if he had no acquaintance with Corporal Billy Bidwell he should have known that such a fellow was

not likely to remain idle during the argument between Ochenah and Arak.

"I never set down so hard in my life," muttered Billy; "I must have made a bulge in China, but it was well I was in a hurry. Sounds to me as if things was getting warm on the other side of the rock."

Instead of bounding over the top as Arak had done, the Corporal hurriedly skirted the obstruction and came upon the two Apaches at the moment they were indulging in their personal remarks, and on the point of emphasizing them by their actions.

One glance was enough for Billy to grasp the situation. Standing two or three paces distant, only enough in fact to give his arms free play, he leveled his gun at Ochenah.

"Hands up! I've got the drop on you!" he commanded.

It cannot be known that Ochenah caught the meaning of the command. The Corporal was again impressed with the handiness of an acquaintance with the tongue of his enemy. The occasion was one of those in which it may be said that actions speak louder than words. Ochenah saw that all hope for him was over.

And then what do you suppose Ochenah did? He showed the yellow streak in him by saying to Arak:

"I cannot fight you both, but I will fight you alone."

It was a safe proposal. Ochenah was thirty pounds heavier than Arak, taller and more athletic. It would seem he ran little risk in a personal encounter, though the smaller had more than once proved himself a formidable foe.

As for Arak, nothing could have suited him better than an encounter of that nature. He turned to explain the situation to Corporal Bidwell, and ask him to step aside and not interfer.

Perhaps Billy suspected the meaning of what his friend said to him. If so the sly rascal pretended he did not.

"I'm glad I don't know anything of your lingo; I remember reading when I was a youngster at school that sometimes ignorance is bliss; I guess this is one of them times."

As one unconsciously does when trying to make himself understood, the Corporal raised his voice:

"He's my prisoner; he must walk a chalkline to camp, where Captain Lawton can talk with him."

Possibly the Corporal's gestures were better than Arak's; for when he nodded toward the captive, Arak understood what he meant. He reached out his hand for the ugly knife which Ochenah grasped. He meekly handed it over and Arak stooped and picked up the rifle of the other. Thus the prisoner stood unarmed and helpless.

"The next thing to do, Arak, is to march him to camp; you take the lead, let him follow and I'll bring up the rear; the first move he makes to trick us I'll plug him—thunder! I forgot you don't talk English. However, lead on anyway."

Arak felt it his duty to explain matters.

"You heard me ask him to let us fight it out; I know he would be glad to do so, and I should be as happy as you, but he cannot know what I say, therefore, you must go with us to the white man's camp."

"What will they do with me?" asked Ochenah, his bronzed face plainly showing his fear.

"I hope they will shoot you, but I'm afraid they won't."

"The white men do not kill their prisoners?"

"It is a foolish way they have, but I am not to blame."

"If they will spare my life I will tell them all I know," was the abject promise of Ochenah.

"Which isn't much; I will lead and you follow; don't forget, Ochenah, that the white man will be glad of an excuse for shooting you."

The vigorous gestures of the Corporal, who may be looked upon as the captain of the party, straightened out matters. Arak took the lead, Ochenah walked directly behind him, while the white man acted as rear guard.

"You're a sweet looking gentleman," muttered the captor; "how happy you would have been if you could have bored me through when you last fired! Why don't you make a jump at Arak so as to give me the chance I'm waiting for? Because you're too big a coward, but for two cents I'd let drive with my foot and lift you a mile and

a half in the air, only it would be more apt to hurt me through my moccasin than you."

And I am compelled to say that that was the real reason why Corporal Bidwell did not deliver the most powerful kick of which he was master.

It was but a short distance to camp. The scouts and troops were worn out, for they had been pressing forward unceasingly for eighteen hours, with hardly a mouthful of food, and at times suffering intensely from thirst. The only member of the party who did not show fatigue was Captain Lawton himself. But he knew of what others were capable, and blunt spoken to curtness as he often was, he was always considerate. He had given orders for a halt and rest. Water was at hand, and from the herd of cattle that were beginning to move about a nourishing meal for all could be had.

When Arak and Corporal Bidwell escorted their prisoner to camp, Captain Lawton was seated on a boulder smoking his pipe. He was thirty pounds lighter than when he started on this fearful march, but still a Hercules in strength, and as active

and lithe as a trained athlete, which in fact he was.

The interpreter of the company was Jose Maria, a Mexican who had been a captive among the Apaches for seventeen years. Captain Lawton called him forward and told him to ask Arak what it all meant. When this was explained, Captain Lawton uttered an impatient exclamation.

"So he's ready to tell all he knows; what can he tell me which I do not already know? Why didn't he fight it out like a man instead of allowing himself to be made a prisoner? Take him away; he's of no use to me."

It will be recalled that when Corporal Bidwell rushed off to join the attack on the hostiles, he left Señor Morelos and his wife some distance away at the base of the foothills. Obeying his command, they stayed there until the sounds of firing had ceased. Their anxiety was almost uncontrollable, and now they made haste to the spot. Knowing the exact location of the cave, the husband ran ahead of his wife, who was close behind him. The troops who saw him did not know what to make of his wild looks

and haste. Glancing neither to the right nor left, he bounded through the opening.

"Anita! Anita! here are your father and mother!" he called.

The next moment he staggered back as if smitten by a bullet. Clutching the side of the entrance to save himself from falling, he muttered:

" She is gone! The Apaches have taken her away! "

CHAPTER XI.

THE CARTEL.

WHEN the pitiful story was told to Captain Lawton, he showed the fine-grained chivalry and sympathy with which those who knew the officer best had long been familiar. He asked the particulars from Corporal Bidwell, who related them.

Strangely enough the mother showed more restraint and self-control than her husband. For some minutes after sitting down he was in a state of collapse, unable to answer questions or to speak. His wife, pale, gentle and quiet, sat beside him, laid her hand affectionately on his shoulder and tried to utter words of comfort.

"Well," said Lawton, when he understood everything, " it may prove a good thing that this devil was brought in a prisoner."

Several read his meaning, but waited for

him to explain. The Captain addressed himself to Jose Maria the interpreter:

"Get word to Geronimo as soon as you can that if he harms a hair of the head of this little girl, I'll have—what's his name?—Ochenah burned at the stake! I won't do it, of course," he added, "but we may as well chuck the bluff. One thing is certain—if they do hurt the child, I'll wipe this imp off the face of the earth. Do you understand, Jose?"

The interpreter replied that all was clear to him.

"Well, as soon as we have breakfast off with you. Señor Morelos, I believe these cattle are your property?"

The Mexican had partly rallied, but his face was a picture of woe unspeakable.

"They are; you and your men are welcome to all you need."

"We'll use two or three, but we don't take a pound of meat without paying for it; don't protest; it's the government that foots the bill."

Several men were detailed to kill and prepare the beeves. They were accustomed to such work, and eager to provide the food

for themselves and comrades. Captain Lawton put the scared prisoner in charge of two guards with orders to shoot him on his first break. He talked with the parents of the missing child, or rather with the father, who spoke good English.

"I am more sorry than I can tell," said the officer, "but I think you have reason to hope for the best."

"Your words cheer us," replied the Mexican, who promptly translated for his wife; "but I fear the worst."

"Geronimo and Natchez put more value on the life of that buck than they do upon your little girl."

"Are they not likely to slay our Anita before they learn you have a prisoner?"

"If such were their purpose they would not have taken her away," replied Captain Lawton; "the Apaches as a rule do not make prisoners when on their raids, but they sometimes do so. You have heard of the Peck family?"

Morelos knew nothing of the incident.

"Peck was a ranchman, like you. He had no thought of danger, and before he could defend himself his home was sur-

rounded, the whole family captured and several of the farm hands killed. The sight of his wife tortured to death made Peck insane for the time. All Indians are in awe of a crazy person, and they allowed him to go free. He was afterward found by his friends wandering about the neighborhood.

"The daughter was older than yours. They made off with her and we pursued them for three hundred miles. While the Apaches were fleeing, they ran into a party of Mexicans, who fired a volley among them and killed several. The man who had charge of the little girl was wounded, and she ran away from him. His horse was shot, so he could not follow his companions as they fled. He took to the rocks, and stood off the whole Mexican force, which numbered fully sixty men. He killed seven, and in every instance shot the Mexicans through the head. The little girl was delivered to me, and I sent her back to the States, where she will be taken care of."

This incident is strictly true, Captain Leonard Wood having been one of those who took part in the pursuit of the Apaches.

During the absence of Jose Maria the in-

terpreter, the trailers ate their breakfast. Captain Lawton insisted upon paying Morelos a liberal price for the meat, taking his receipt in pencil. The meal was not finished when Maris Roydon and Bob Goodale appeared. Lawton welcomed them, and even ventured on one of his grim jokes.

"How different it would have been had you been with us! We always have mighty bad luck when we are without your help."

"We shall do our best to prevent the oversight occurring again," said Maris, "we knew something was up when we heard the firing. It looks as if you came mighty near surprising them."

"A miss is as bad as a mile; one of their infernal ponies scented us and let out a neigh that you must have heard at the ranch house."

Bob was puzzled, when at this moment he caught the eye of Corporal Bidwell, and that worthy indulged in an enormous wink. When he had the chance to take his young friends aside, he explained:

"I daresn't tell the Captain, but the pony that give the hostiles the alarm was mine; I was mad enough to shoot him; I think the

Captain would do it anyway; I see you have brought your saddles and bridles."

"Yes, and they are a pretty good load on this sultry morning; we thought we might find either our own animals or some others."

"They're not far off, and the most innocent looking one among 'em is mine."

"You seem to have a prisoner, Corporal," remarked Maris, glancing at Ochenah, who was sitting on a boulder a few feet to the rear of Captain Lawton.

Bidwell explained what had taken place since his leaving the house of the ranchman the evening before, adding that Captain Lawton hoped they could use the Apache to exchange for little Anita.

"Why didn't you speak to the señora when she came out of the house last night, Maris?" asked the Corporal, looking at him.

"What business of mine was it if she decided to join her husband?"

"Such a thought never hinders you from butting in, but you pretend to be so polite, I'd think you would have said good-night to her."

"How do you know I did not?"

"She says you didn't open your mouth; you're a healthy sentinel, ain't you?" added Billy, with an expression of disgust.

"Well, I don't see that any harm followed—not half as much as when your pony warned the hostiles in time for them to get away. Ah, here's Jose Maria."

The interpreter was observed approaching from among the rocks. He came straight to Captain Lawton, saluted and said:

"I have talked with Geronimo."

"What does he say?"

"He doesn't believe we have any prisoner to exchange with him for the little girl; he says it is pretence on your part, so as to get his captive from him."

"We can soon satisfy him as to that."

"So I told him; I asked him to come nigh enough to our camp to have a look at it, and we will show him Ochenah."

"How did that strike him?"

"He says he will come to that gray rock off yonder to the left, and if we show him we have one of his warriors, he will make the exchange."

"Do you suppose he is there now?"

Captain Lawton rose to his feet and leveled his field glass at the point indicated by the interpreter. Suddenly the giant officer exclaimed in a low tone:

"Yes; Geronimo is there! I can see the side of his head, one arm and his glass which is pointed this way. Tell the prisoner to stand up."

The interpreter repeated the command to Ochenah, who also rose, thus bringing him into clear view of his chief.

"I guess that will satisfy him; tell Ochenah he may sit down."

Without seeming to do so, Captain Lawton drew the interpreter aside, beyond hearing of the distressed parents, who seemed hardly to breathe in their anguish of anxiety.

"Did you see the child?" asked the Captain.

"No, for I was not allowed to go into their camp."

"Do you think she is alive, Jose?"

"I can only *hope* so; they would not have gone to the trouble of carrying her away in their haste if they had not thought they could make use of her."

"Before this exchange takes place, you must insist that you see the captive. Geronimo wouldn't believe you till it was proved before his eyes and you must demand the same right."

"I shall remember that."

"And Jose you know something of the Apaches."

The sallow face spread into a smile. "I lived for seventeen years among them; how could I help learning much of them?"

"Then I need not remind you that you can't trust one of those people out of your sight. Geronimo, Natchez and the others will do their best to trick you into turning Ochenah free and keeping or killing the little girl."

Jose Maria repeated his assurance that he understood Apache nature too well to be deceived.

"You may as well return to Geronimo and fix up your plan for exchange."

Jose turned from the group of soldiers and scouts, who were lounging about in all manner of attitudes. After their morning meal, they needed rest so sorely that they were more than willing to turn over opera-

tions for the time to two who displayed so much activity and interest.

The interpreter wound his way in and among the rocks until he passed behind the large one where the famous Medicine Man of the Apaches was awaiting him.

"You saw him?" remarked Jose, questioningly.

"Why did he allow himself to be taken prisoner?" asked Geronimo, who was angered over the discovery.

"He couldn't help it."

"Did Arak have anything to do with it?"

"He and one of the soldiers caught Ochenah where he was helpless. He wanted to fight Arak alone, and Arak was eager they should do so, but the soldier would not permit it. So Ochenah was brought into camp."

"I shall remember this against Arak," exclaimed Geronimo, with a tigerish gleam of his piercing eyes: "he is of the same blood as we, but he is a dog who is not fit to live."

"Do you wish to exchange the child you have with you for Ochenah?"

"I am willing to do so," replied Ger-

onimo, as if the matter was of small concern to him.

"How shall it be done?"

"Send Ochenah to us and we will release the child who can go to you."

"You would not believe we had Ochenah until you saw him; Captain Lawton said I must make sure the little girl is with you."

"You can go with me to the camp, but it is a mile away. Then you will see that Geronimo speaks the truth."

This proposition did not commend itself to Jose Maria. If he accepted the invitation, he would place himself in the power of the unscrupulous Apache. It would be the easiest thing in the world for him to make a second prisoner, and gain an undue advantage.

"You know the mesa a little to one side of where we are talking. Send Ochenah there, and as soon as he comes we will send the child."

"Captain Lawton will not agree to that."

"Why not?"

"He does not believe you will keep your promise."

"Geronimo gives his pledge."

"And he doesn't accept it; it would not be on equal terms."

"What then do you ask?"

"Bring the child to the edge of the mesa; we shall do the same with Ochenah; then when she starts to come toward us, Ochenah shall walk toward you; they will meet half way on the mesa, but neither must have any companions."

Geronimo was silent for a minute and then gave his assent to the plan. In arranging for the exchange of prisoners there always comes a point where one or both parties must trust to the honor of the other. No possible precautions could be thought of that would avert such a situation.

"When shall it be?" asked Jose.

"When the sun is there," replied Geronimo, pointing to a place in the sky which the orb would reach in about an hour.

"That is the agreement," said Jose turning about and returning to camp, where as may be supposed, his coming was awaited with great interest.

"You couldn't have done better," commented Captain Lawton, after the method of exchange was explained to him. "But

we can't be too cautious; they will be quick to take the slightest advantage. Much depends on you, Jose."

After consulting further, it was decided that the prisoner should be conducted without his weapons to the mesa, which was only a few acres in extent. He would be accompanied by Jose, Arak, Corporal Bidwell, Maris Roydon and Bob Goodale as guard. This would make five persons all armed, and on the alert for treachery. It was understood that if anything of the kind was attempted, the prisoner would be shot down on the instant.

Captain Lawton sat twisting the end of his long mustache, as he often did when pondering a puzzling question. He did not speak for some time, and no one ventured to intrude upon his thoughts.

It must be confessed that he held painful doubts about the child being alive. The question remained as to why the hostiles had carried her even for a short distance, if they did not hope to make some use of her. No consideration of mercy entered into their thoughts when an enemy or white person was concerned. What perplexed the officer

was the readiness with which Geronimo had fallen in with the proposals of Jose Maria. After his own offer, which he must have known would be rejected, he was quick to agree with his visitor.

But, as has been said a certain confidence must be given another in such a negotiation as was on foot. Lawton did not see how any better scheme could be used, and he gave his assent, warning the interpreter again to be vigilant against any perfidy on the part of their prisoner or his friends.

When Jose was through with the Captain, Señora Morelos asked the privilege of speaking a few words alone with the interpreter. With a wan smile she told her husband that what she meant to say must be a secret even from him for the time.

"Jose, tell me truly; do you believe Anita is alive?" asked the mother, fixing her dark eyes on the swarthy countenance.

"I am confident of it," he said, though his words were not true, for, like Captain Lawton, he held painful doubts.

"Do you believe they will yield her to us?"

"Why should they not? It has been said

that they place more value on the life of one of their best warriors than upon that of a child."

"I am glad to hear you speak thus; as I understand, your plan is to take Ochenah to the edge of the mesa and there await the coming of Anita?"

"That is true."

"Suppose when you get there, he tries to run away from you?"

"We shall shoot him as if he were a dog."

"And that would end all hope for Anita?"

"Yes; and all hope for Ochenah; he is a coward and will not take the risk; he does not wish to be shot any more than you or I do."

"I thank you for the hope you have given me, but I shall not breathe freely till I clasp the darling in my arms."

"And I hope that will be within the coming hour."

CHAPTER XII.

APACHE HONOR.

ONLY Juan Morelos watched the action of his wife after she had exchanged the few words with Jose Maria. The others were interested in their own affairs or in the important incident believed now to be close at hand.

Without looking at anyone else, Concha walked away from camp, taking a direction toward the spot where she had joined Corporal Bidwell and her husband the night before.

"She is going apart to pray," was the thought of Morelos; "never was there more need of prayer than now."

He sat down and reverently inclined his head as he had done many times since the danger came to his child.

The whole plan had been made clear to Ochenah. He was to take his place at the

head of the procession, with Jose and Arak walking next, then Corporal Bidwell, Maris Roydon and finally Bob Goodale.

"It always seems to be my lot to bring up the rear," remarked the last named, a few minutes before the start was made.

"You won't have any chance this time to tumble into a pit," replied Maris, "or to give us the slip."

Ochenah asked for his gun and knife, but Jose shook his head.

"We give you your life which is worth more."

The mesa as has been said was only a few acres in area, of irregular shape and perhaps two hundred yards across at its greatest width. The small plateau was a few hundred feet above the plain at the base of the foothills, the mountains towering far aloft behind it.

Arak had been in the section before, and recalled the spot when Geronimo spoke. At certain seasons the tract was covered with lush grass. Juan Morelos and his wife had often found the cattle cropping there, so it was familiar to them.

The preparations were simple. The lit-

tle party moved in the order named. The course of necessity was winding, for rocks and boulders were always present in that part of the world, but Ochenah led as if he were the captain and the others under his orders. The distance passed was perhaps an eighth of a mile, far enough to take the members beyond the immediate support of Captain Lawton's command.

What Jose, Arak and Corporal Bidwell feared—though none spoke of it—was an ambuscade. There was no end of hiding places for the Apaches, who had the best chance in the world to shoot down the five without giving them a show to defend themselves. But it may be repeated that there was no way of avoiding a certain risk.

The time fixed for the meeting of the parties could not in the nature of things be exact. It was natural that Arak and his charge reached the mesa ahead of the others. Halting on the edge of the small plateau, our friends looked to the other side, but saw no one.

"Wait," commanded Arak, in a low, sharp voice to the prisoner; "don't take another step till I give you the word."

Ochenah stood like a statue, keenly watching the far end of the mesa.

"Keep back," warned Jose to the Corporal and the youths; "they may fire on us."

Each eye was centred on the opposite side, where, among the stunted firs and the boulders some kind of a movement was observed. Suddenly the flicker of a bright dress caught the eye of the party.

"It's Anita!" exclaimed Maris, amazed and delighted; "she is safe."

"Keep back," warned Jose again; "if there's any deviltry going it will take shape within the next minute."

The little girl was in charge of one or more Apaches, who, however, kept out of sight. She could be seen to turn her head as if trying to talk with her captors. The listeners were sure they heard her voice, though they did not catch her words.

Ochenah took a step forward.

"Wait!" commanded Arak; "you may walk out in a minute if she comes on."

"She has started," said the prisoner.

Such was the fact. Anita, as if obedience to a command appeared in front of the trees

and rocks. She moved hesitatingly. Evidently she did not fully understand the circumstances.

Arak waited until she had taken eight or ten steps. Then he saw her stop abruptly, as if those in charge of her had told her to do so. They were excusable for this, inasmuch as Ochenah was still motionless.

"Go," said Arak, in a low voice, "but don't walk faster that she."

The singular sight was now presented of a burly Apache and a young child advancing upon each other. Despite the warning to the man, the warrior strode faster than the little girl, who was still mystified by the proceedings.

Thus it came about that when the two met, they were considerably nearer the point from which Anita had started than they were to her destination. It was at this juncture that someone—afterward proved to be Geronimo himself—called out something in an angry voice. He spoke to Ochenah and was heard by both Arak and Jose.

"Treachery!" called the interpreter, drawing his rifle round in front.

Before Corporal Bidwell or Maris or Bob

could understand what was meant, the mischief was done. When directly in front of Anita, Ochenah took a quick step, caught up the child, wheeled around and held her like a shield in front of him, while he stepped backward toward the Apaches who were still out of sight. It was in obedience to Geronimo's command that Ochenah had done this shameful thing.

Bidwell, Arak and Jose were eager to fire, but dared not, for the cunning miscreant held her so fairly in front that his head and body were protected down to the knees. Even those were shielded, for he stooped low while keeping up his retreat.

Still Corporal Bidwell would have fired, for he knew he could wound the buck in the foot so that he would be crippled, but the young captive defeated his purpose. When she was caught in the grasp of the hideous Apache, she screamed and began frantically struggling to release herself. Her arms and legs flew about so that the best marksman that ever lived would have been almost sure to hurt her.

In the frightful crisis, the whole party would have run forward to the rescue of the

child, but before they could do so, with almost fatal consequence to themselves, the necessity passed with the suddenness of lightning.

From a point to the right of the mesa sounded the whip-like crack of a rifle. Ochenah emitted a rasping cry, staggered back a few paces, collapsed and went down. Freeing herself from his spasmodic grasp, Anita stood looking wildly about her, not knowing which way to turn or what to do. Then the voice of her mother rang out:

"This way, Anita! Run! Run!"

She saw her parent rise from behind a boulder, rifle still in hand and leveled toward the group. Then with a cry of delight the child sped like a fairy across the mesa to the happy parent.

"Quick!" called Jose; "fire into them or they will capture both!"

The five opened a rattling discharge, aiming at the point from which the girl had come. They saw no one, but knew the Apaches were there and would charge out unless checked in this peremptory fashion.

Although the mother had fired to kill she did not succeed. She badly wounded Och-

enah who climbed painfully to his feet and limped back among his friends. Pausing but a moment to embrace her darling, the señora rapidly fled in the direction of the camp where all arrived a few minutes later.

Everyone understood how it had been done. The intuition of the mother warned her not to pin any faith to Apache honor. Having learned the intended plan of procedure from Jose Maria, she stole around so as to be at the side of the mesa when her child walked forth to meet the Apache prisoner. It was because of her position at the side of the mesa that she gained a better aim at Ochenah, who, like his companions, did not dream of danger from that point of the compass.

Captain Lawton was among the most pleased when he learned how a woman's wit had defeated the perfidy of Geronimo.

"What will she charge to enlist as one of my scouts?" he asked of Juan Morelos.

"She would be happy to do so," replied the proud husband, "if she could be spared from the ranch."

"You have a splendid wife, Juan, and what a lovely little girl! I wonder whether

she would care to sit on the knee of an old tramp like me."

Anita was a little timid at first, but when it was explained to her that the grim soldier was one of their best friends, she not only climbed upon his muscular knee, but put her dimpled arms about his neck and kissed him.

"Well, now, that's worth a day's march any time," said the pleased officer; "who can forget the truth that of such is the kingdom of heaven? God bless you and your father and mother."

In answer to questions, Anita told her story from which the singular fact came to light that her discovery by the Apaches was caused by the suddeness of the attack on their camp. Among the squaws who bounded to their feet on the first rifle crack was an old woman, who for the moment was bewildered. Believing no escape was contemplated by flight, she dashed into the cave of whose existence she had learned hours before. As she did so, she came upon the sleeping Anita. The flight of the raiders took place a few minutes later and with a vague idea of possible benefit to be gained

from having such a captive, she took the child with her.

Anita said no harm or abuse was offered her, but from the fact that her captor struck many blows in her defence, it was quite likely there were many among the band who did not wish to be bothered with prisoners.

Before bidding good-bye to their new friends, Captain Lawton assured them they need have no fear of going back to their home and staying there.

"Neither this band nor any other will ever raid through here again," he said in his emphatic manner.

"They have been raiding for many years," replied Morelos, who wished to believe the words of the brave officer; "sometimes we think they will never stop."

"We shall keep after them till we run every one to earth; we have gathered a good number in, and these are about all that's left to make trouble. I repeat that you may go to your ranch and give yourselves no further fear."

It was not merely the words of Captain Lawton, but his manner which gave comfort

to Juan Morelos, and through him to his wife.

"Should the fortunes of war ever bring you in this neighborhood," said the grateful Mexican, "all I have is for you and your brave men."

"I don't doubt it, my good fellow; well, it's time we were moving and I shall have to say good-bye to you and yours."

He shook the hand of the husband and wife. Little Anita stood looking wonderingly up at the grim soldier, whose words she could not understand, but that he had won her regard was shown by her smiles when she stepped forward and laid her tiny, velvety hand in the iron palm of the officer. He stooped and picked her up. Then with only the slightest effort he tossed her a dozen feet in air, catching her as she came down with her dress and hair fluttering and her eyes glowing.

"Buenos dias; gracias; espere que le volvere a ver a Usted pronto."

"Mr. Roydon, what does she say?" asked Lawton, turning to the youth, forgetful that her father could have translated for him.

"She bids you good-bye, and says she hopes soon to see you again."

"That's what I thought," grinned the veteran, who had a good knowledge of Spanish, "but I want to be sure."

He kissed the child and resigned her to her mother. Hat in hand the modern knight watched the parents and their child as they departed soon passing from sight. Like all brave men, Lawton had a heart as tender as a woman's. There was a little more moisture than usual in his keen eyes as he turned and gave his attention to his duties. He did not speak for a minute, possibly because he was not quite sure of his voice, but the emotion speedily passed, and he became the dashing, whirlwind soldier of whom it could be said, if the words were ever true of any man, that he knew not the meaning of fear.

During the preceding half hour or more three of the scouts had been out on duty. One of these was Arak who came back alone and reported to Captain Lawton that the hostiles were passing directly over the Sierra Madre spur and going southward. Through Jose Maria the scout was questioned.

"How far is it to where they will come down and give us the chance to use our animals?"

"If they keep straight on, it is ten miles, but Geronimo may change his mind and push further among the mountains; then we shall not be able to use our horses. He is heading for Sonora, and will not stop till he reaches there."

"Has he made any effort to communicate with me?"

"He has not."

"Isn't ready yet; he's got to have more hammering and *he's going to get it!*" added Captain Lawton, with a compression of his thin lips and a flash of his eyes.

Addressing Billy Bidwell, the officer added:

"You will take our horses and those of the hostiles around this spur to the other side: you will have Mr. Roydon and Goodale to help, though there oughtn't to be any difficulty."

"Yes, sir," replied the Corporal, saluting.

"You are not acquainted with this section?"

"No, sir."

"Would you like to have one of the scouts show you the way?"

"I do not need him, sir."

"And, Corporal," added the Captain; "I'd like you to find out which one of the Indian animals neighed when we drew near this camp. If there is any way of learning —though I hardly see that there can be any way—shoot him."

The round face of the Corporal was as grave as a judge's as he replied:

"If the critter is fond of neighing, he will try it again; I'll give myself the benefit of the doubt and plug—that is shoot him."

"It is proper that I should add another caution; you and the animals will travel over the plain, which is mostly level, while we shall have the hardest kind of climbing. You will be likely to reach the meeting point ahead of us. *You mustn't do it.*"

"I shall remember your orders, sir."

"When you have traversed most of the distance, wait for a signal from us."

The Captain was through with the Corporal and turned his back on him. As Bidwell wheeled he bestowed another of his

overwhelming winks upon Maris Roydon and Bob Goodale, who had hard work to restrain their laughter. Just then, Jose Maria signified that he wished to say something in the private ear of Arak who was standing near.

"Arak, I must warn you against Geronimo."

The scout looked his astonishment.

"We hate each other; it is the same with all the scouts."

"You helped make Ochenah prisoner; Geronimo has threatened you to me; he will do all he can to revenge himself upon you."

Arak's swarthy face expressed his contempt.

"I care nothing for him nor for Natchez; it will be better for *them* to look out for me, than for me to look out for them. Arak was not afraid of Chihuahua, Josane and Cuthley and they surrendered to Lieutenant Maus, and are all greater warriors than Geronimo. Ah, let him look out for *me!*" added Arak with a fierceness that seemed to sit well upon him.

CHAPTER XIII.

FLANKING THE MOUNTAIN SPUR.

IN ordinary circumstances the task of Corporal Bidwell, Maris Roydon and Bob Goodale would have been simple. All they had to do was to mount their own ponies, driving ahead those captured from the Apaches, until they traversed the intervening ten miles or so that would take them to the other side of the mountain spur, and into the province of Sonora.

But the heat became unendurable. They were sure it was more intense than on the preceding day when it almost overcame them. It was midsummer, and that season in southern Arizona and Sonora is about as hot as human beings can live in.

After riding for half the distance, Corporal Bidwell slipped from his horse and the youths immediately did the same. Slight as was their weight, it was trying to

the beasts, and all felt they could stand the flaming heat better on foot than on the back of an animal.

There was no shade available. They circled out on the blistering plain, so as to be beyond all obstructions. The heads of the ponies drooped, and from several the tongues lolled. There might have been a few ribbons of shadow among the rocks and boulders of the foothills, but as the sun climbed toward meridian, this faint protection grew less and less.

The cavalcade plodded on for several miles more, the three in charge feeling too miserable to speak. It was now near noon, and they had journeyed as far as was prudent until they received the signal from the scouts that all was right. If they should run into Geronimo and his raiders it would prove a bad thing for our friends. They could make no stand against those terrific desperadoes who would slay them, and not only recapture their own animals, but several that did not belong to them. The burros and ponies which Captain Lawton had brought into this region were at a safe

distance, and could be recovered whenever it was prudent to do so.

Suddenly the horse of Corporal Bidwell raised his head, pricked his ears, sniffed and swerving to the left, started briskly toward the foothills.

"What is the meaning of that?" asked Bob Goodale.

"It looks as if he scented water."

"Can it be possible? I fear it means something else. Look at the others."

Every animal had caught the excitement. The dozen or so were walking fast. The Corporal's pony broke into a gallop despite the fervent heat. Their masters were hardly less agitated, and strove to hold pace with them. On no other theory than that named by Bidwell could the action of the brutes be explained.

It proved to be the blessed truth. At some point far up in the mountain spur, a spring of water bubbled and trickled through the foothills to the edge of the parched plain. There it ran parallel to the hills for several hundred yards before turning outward to be sucked up by the sand whose thirst was unquenchable. At certain seasons it flowed

farther, but never attained much distance. Many rivers as in parts of South Africa, lose themselves in this manner.

The course of the stream could be traced over the plain for some distance, by the slightly more vigorous growth of grass, but this hardly would have caught attention of itself. Before the outflow, only a few inches wide, was reached all the animals were galloping. The first one to arrive was Corporal Billy's, who thrust his nose into the shallow rivulet and drank as deeply as he could. His companions ranged themselves above him, some stepping into the water, which speedily became roiled, and so lessened in volume that the ponies, impatient that they should be robbed in that manner, drew back and hurried above those who were cheating them. This shifting of places continued, and the odd sight was presented of the whole bunch ascending the stream in a spasmodic, jerky fashion that in other circumstances would have been amusing.

Corporal Bidwell and his friends went up the water course, so as to place themselves well above the crowding animals. Lying down on their faces they drank their fill

from the clear current. It was hardly cool but tremendously refreshing. Had it been cold, the ponies would have been in danger of foundering, or closh or laminitus.

Not only was water thus obtained, but the more luxuriant grass that fringed the rivulet gave the animals good pasturage. Our friends having drank their fill, seated themselves beyond danger of disturbance from the horses who seemed never fully to slake their thirst.

"We can't be far from the place where Captain Lawton and the rest will come down into the foothills and onto the plain," said the Corporal, "which being so we may as well wait here till we get the signal from him."

"I hope it won't come before dark," remarked Bob Goodale; "this is the best place we can have for waiting."

The three lolled where they managed to get a thin streak of shade, but they were most uncomfortable. While there were no musquitoes which had made life unbearable in other places, millions of flies pestered them.

"Bob," said Maris, after they had

lounged thus for a few minutes; "I have asked myself many times within the last week or two whether there are two greater fools in the world than we have shown ourselves to be."

"I can answer that by saying *no,*" was the disgusted reply of Bob; "any sensible person would have been satisfied by that tramp with Lieutenant Maus, without turning about as we did and going all over it again with Captain Lawton; but it wasn't *our* fault after all, Maris."

"Whose fault was it?"

"Corporal Bidwell's."

The Corporal who was lying on his back with his hat over his face twitched the covering aside and glared at the speaker.

"What do you mean?"

"When you flipped up that half dollar you had it fixed so the head showed no matter which side came up."

"How did you find that out?" asked the amused Maris.

"I saw it at the time."

"Why didn't you denounce the fraud?"

"For the same reason that *you* didn't; you knew it, too."

"So I did; Billy saw we were bent on making asses of ourselves and he had sense enough not to interfere."

The Corporal made a vicious slap at a fly that was tickling his nostrils, missed it though he didn't miss his nose, replaced his hat and gave no further heed to the conversation.

"Maris, if we ever live to get out of this infernal country, I intend to strike a bee-line for Switzerland; will you go with me?"

"What for?"

"I shall travel as fast as I can till I catch sight of Mont Blanc; then without halting except to get my breath, I'm going to start for the top. I believe the guides take you to a hut part way up where you stay over night, so as to begin the real climb early the next morning."

"That's the rule."

"Well, when I get to that hut, I'm going to engage quarters there for six months; I calculate it will take me that long to get cooled off after I have crawled out of this part of the world."

"We can do as well by engaging passage for the North Pole."

"The trouble is we'll probably have to wait too long. There would be one advantage," added Bob, thoughtfully; "we should be likely to meet icebergs on the way, and we could leave the ship and live on one of them for a few months. I'll think it over."

"It seems to me we can find something for a substitute; you have an ice house on your place, the same as I; they might answer for a time."

"I know another thing that won't be bad," said Bob, smacking his lips, as if he were thinking of something for his palate. "Before our ice house was built, father put up a spring house; a stream of water flows through that which is several degrees colder than ice; the folks set the milk and butter in it to cool 'em. I'll tumble all the jars and pans out so as to give me room, take off every stitch of clothing, and lie down in the icy water and sleep for the first two or three nights. Don't you think that will help?"

"I'm quite sure it would; what shall we live on?"

"Frozen sherbert for breakfast, ice cream

for lunch and sherbet and ice cream for dinner—nothing else for a year or two—"

Maris touched the arm of Bob, and pointed at Corporal Bidwell. He had flung his hat from his face, was leaning on one elbow and reading a letter. It was the missive that they had seen him read many times. It was written on foolscap, and so worn where folded that it had to be handled carefully to prevent it falling apart.

From where the youths reclined they could see in a big, scrawling hand the headline of "Denver," and the date several months old. In the same straddling script one could trace the words, "My Dear Pop." Indeed, still more could have been read at a considerable distance, but the boys would never permit themselves that liberty. They felt too much respect for the father.

The Corporal seemed unconscious that anyone was present. He tenderly turned the flimsy page over, read it slowly, and then with the utmost delicacy refolded the half-sheet and shoved it into his inner pocket.

He brought out the photograph and feasted his eyes on that. Looking up and seeing his friends watching him, he passed

the picture to Maris, who studied the portrait a few minutes, as if he had not done so many times before.

"I never saw a sweeter face; have you, Bob?"

And Bob Goodale sat up and peered over the shoulder of his comrade.

"Never; it's not only pretty, but it's good."

"It don't do justice to her," remarked the proud father; "all she needs is wings."

"I should give thousands of dollars for a sister like that," added Maris with a gentle sigh.

"That couldn't be, for there ain't any others like Molly."

After admiring the face for some minutes Maris handed the photo to the Corporal, who held it for another inspection and then placed it with the letter.

"Corporal, where do you live in Denver?" abruptly asked Maris Roydon. In reply to the wondering look of the man, the youth added:

"When Bob and I go home I think we shall stop at Denver and call on Molly and

her grandmother, who I believe is your mother."

"You don't say!" exclaimed the delighted Corporal; "that will be splendid; will you really do it?"

"That is our intention."

"Jiminy! won't Molly just be tickled to death? And as for mother, she will be as happy as Molly. You want to know where I live. Have you ever been in Denver?"

"I have been through the city but never left the train there."

"Well, you get out, of course, at the Union Depot; then you walk northwest across the Platte toward Highland Park, then out toward Rocky Mountain Lake. There you'll strike Taylor avenue, which fronts on Rocky Mountain Lake. Walk a little way along that and you will come to a two-story frame cottage, painted white with green blinds, flowers in front, and a graveled walk leading down to the gate. That's where Molly lives with her grandmother."

"Do you own the house?"

"Certainly," replied the Corporal, loftily, "but there's a small mortgage on it."

"What is the value of the house and property?"

"Twenty-two hundred dollars; I have paid it all except two thousand dollars."

Maris threw back his head and laughed.

"Is that the amount of the mortgage?"

"Of course; didn't I make it clear enough?"

"Have you ever figured as to when you can pay off the mortgage, Corporal?"

"Many a time; you see a corporal begins on fifteen dollars a month, getting a dollar extra each month after the first two years. About all I need is a little money now and then for 'bacca; figuring pretty close and allowing for clothes and support for Molly and her grandmother, and an occasional promotion, I shall be able to pay off that mortgage when I'm a hundred and ten years old. I've been trying to figure a year or two off of that, but you must allow for sickness and little expenses out of the reg'lar run."

"Then, too, as Molly grows older, it will cost more to dress and educate her; I'm afraid, Corporal, that there isn't much chance of your clearing off that mortgage."

"You both seem to forget one thing," remarked Bob.

"What's that?"

"That Corporal is still a young man; he is on his fifth year and gets eighteen dollars a month; his promotion is sure to keep on until he becomes first sergeant, where he begins with twenty-five dollars and gradually creeps up, finally reaching if he lives, regimental commission sergeant, with more than forty dollars a month pay."

"Sure," assented Maris, who, although soon to become an officer was not as yet familiar with the regulations of the army; "that makes the prospect brighter. It must take considerable of your pay to meet the interest on your mortgage."

"Only a hundred dollars; the rate is five per cent."

"'Only a hundred dollars,'" repeated Maris; "of course that is but a trifle to *you.*"

"Now, to make certain that you won't fail to call on Molly, Maris, will you repeat the directions as I gave 'em to you?"

The youth did so without hesitation or error.

"If you should forget, I shall not," added Bob, who had fixed the location of the Corporal's home in his memory. "Don't you have any misgivings; we made up our minds long ago to call upon Molly; we think it is our duty to let her know something about that father of hers who she seems to believe is just what he should be."

The Corporal had no more idea of what was in the mind of Maris than did his Molly herself, and through fear of awakening such a thought, Maris changed the conversation to a theme which was of ever present interest.

"Do you believe we shall have any signal from Captain Lawton, Corporal?"

"No; why should the hostiles come out from the mountains and give the scouts the chance they want? It will serve Geronimo better to keep us climbing after him."

"He learned long ago that our men can and will follow him anywhere, so I don't see that there is much of a choice either way for him."

"I have thought since we stopped here," said Bob Goodale, "that some of the Apaches might come down the other side of

the mountain spur and make a dash for these animals; they can use them on the plain and they would have the advantage over our troops and scouts."

"It might delay things, for, wherever Captain Lawton's horses may be, it will take some time to bring 'em up."

"Suppose they do make a dash for these ponies, Corporal?"

"The best thing for us to do is to make a dash out of their way; we can't put up any fight ag'inst ten or a dozen of Geronimo's bucks."

"We may not know what's up until they jump on us."

"*He* will give us warning."

The Corporal with a grin nodded toward his horse, which was cropping the grass a few paces away.

"His habit seems to be to warn the hostiles when danger approaches *them;* he may not choose to favor us."

"If I was sure of that," remarked Corporal Bidwell; "I'd shoot him this minute."

"You can't be sure until he is tested."

"And then it may be too late. But I'll give the critter a show."

And then while the eyes of all three were upon the pony, whose bit having been removed, was contentedly cropping the grass, he raised his head and neighed.

The three were startled. The animal had his nose turned in the direction of the plain, and, as before, none of his companions seemed to be aware of anything unusual. If it was not a false alarm, the beast was certainly developing remarkable power of scent.

"What do you suppose it means?" asked Maris, grasping his gun and peering down stream as far as the nature of the ground would permit.

"Strangers! and who can strangers be but Apaches? Wait here a minute while I take a look around.

The Corporal rose to his feet and crouching low, passed out of sight like an Apache scout, while Maris and Bob sat listening and wondering what the explanation could be.

CHAPTER XIV.

DESPOILED.

SUDDENLY through the hot hush of the flaming afternoon came the strange summons of Corporal Bidwell:

"Come here, Maris! here's work for you."

The youth with his comrade at his heels, hurried down the bank of the small stream until he reached the base of the foothills. Before he arrived there, the explanation had partly come to him.

Between thirty and forty Mexican soldiers all excellently mounted, were drawn up on the plain, facing Corporal Bidwell, who had been quick to read their nationality and his consequent need of an interpreter. At their head, in a gilded saddle on a coal black stallion, sat an officer in the uniform of a major of cavalry. The command looked as if on parade, all unconscious of

the suffocating heat which their horses plainly showed.

"Mr. Roydon, these folks can't talk a civilized language, and you know I don't understand their lingo. Show 'em what *you* can do."

Maris advanced, respectfully saluted the officer and expressed the pleasure he felt in greeting him. With becoming dignity, the Mexican announced his rank.

"Major Torreon of the Fourth Mexican Cavalry; we are in the pursuit of the raiding Apaches, who have crossed our border from Arizona."

"We are attached to the command of Captain Lawton who is near at hand on the same business."

"Where is Captain Lawton?"

"Somewhere among the mountains back of us; he is chasing Geronimo and his raiders, and ordered us to take these horses round to the other side of the spur that we may hold them ready against his coming down to the foothills."

"Why have you not done so?" asked Major Torreon, sternly.

"We have ventured as near as is safe; we

were instructed to wait here a signal from Captain Lawton. I believe we are south of the line and in Sonora."

"These animals are not Captain Lawton's."

"They were captured by him from the Apaches."

"And the Apaches stold them from Mexican citizens."

"I don't doubt it," replied Maris, with a smile, noting the direction the conversation was taking; "that's the style of the Apaches when on a raid."

"We shall take them from you."

"I should hardly call it that, Major; on the contrary, allow us to present you with what belongs to your people, hoping each animal may find its rightful owner. That leaves only three which we can claim as our own."

"Where are they? Let me see them."

I must say at this point that Maris Roydon's temper was rising. He generally held it under good control, but nothing touched him so quickly as a reflection upon his honor. He disliked the manner of the Mexican officer, who was supercilious. The young man,

following his usual custom in similar circumstances, had kept up a running translation of what passed between him and the others, doing so for the benefit of Bob Goodale and Corporal Bidwell. He now ceased to interpret, because it handicapped the conversation which grew rapid and personal. Maris could enlighten his friends after it was over.

"Will you bring your horses down here that I may look at them?" asked Major Torreon, in a voice that was more of a command than a request.

"I take orders only from the American government, not from yours nor any representative of yours."

"You and your soldiers have no business in Sonora," said the officer, crisply.

"Just now we have a good deal of business in doing that which you are unable to do; if the Mexican troops ever muster enough courage to cross the line into our territory in pursuit of the Apache raiders, we shall welcome them. But they are not likely to run a risk like that. We have the best wishes of Governor Torres of Sonora,

besides a treaty with President Diaz, which invites us to help do your work."

Major Torreon held himself well in hand. Sitting erect on his horse, the beau ideal in appearance of an officer, he turned to one of his staff at his side and said something in too low a voice for Maris to overhear. Two of the troopers instantly dismounted and started up the little stream among the foot-hills, appearing soon after as they drove the ponies before them.

There were an even twelve, including the three belonging to Maris and his friends. These were noticeable because two wore saddles and bridles, the latter being loosened to permit the animals to graze freely.

"You can identify them by the 'U. S.' brand," said Maris.

"Three others also bear that brand." said the Major; "the Apaches must have taken them from your cavalry."

"More than likely they were stolen by Mexicans first and then the Apaches took the horses from *them.*"

This was pretty strong language, but Maris was angry. Bob and the Corporal knew from his flashing eyes and explosive

sentences that he was stirred. They would have given much to know what was passing between the speakers, but they had to wait until their friend chose to tell them.

"We shall take your three animals, or rather the three that you say are yours," said the officer, with a grin, which showed his gleaming teeth behind his heavy mustache; "you know the punishment of being found in bad company."

"I do, and I ought, therefore, to suffer heavily because of the company in which I now find myself."

"Do you mean to resist our taking all the animals?" asked Major Torreon, bristling.

"There are three of us and about forty of you; that's the odds you prefer; if we had a good position among the rocks, we should stand you off, as that wounded Apache did when he was attacked by a still larger number of Mexican soldiers while running away with the Peck girl. No; it is hardly worth while to make a fight; you will give us a receipt for them."

"Why should I do that?"

"As a voucher to send to President Diaz,

in order that we may be repaid for the property stolen from us."

"I shall do nothing of the kind."

"I was certain you would refuse."

"Why, then, did you ask me?"

"That you should not lose the pleasure of acting dishonorably."

"Your language is dangerous, sir," said the officer, warningly. He saw several shadowy grins among his men, and it was inevitable that his temper should be ruffled.

"The Constitution of my country grants me the right to say what I think. Why do you not hurry after the hostiles instead of lagging on the road for the sake of robbing three Americans?"

"We have been looking for them for weeks past."

"And taking good care not to find them. If you wish to know where Geronimo and his Apaches are, they are among those mountains behind us."

"I do not believe what you say."

"Your course proves that you *do* believe me."

"What do you mean by that?"

"You do not go among the mountains to

look for the Apaches; therefore, you know they are there."

The officer's hand rested on the hilt of his sword. He seemed to meditate for the moment some violent act toward this defiant young American who took so much pains to express his contempt for him. But the mistake made by a brother officer some months before when Captain Crawford lost his life, had already caused complications between the United States and Mexico. President Diaz was stern and would not tolerate any high handed acts on the part of one of his servants in the field. It is possible that Major Torreon had had this fact already impressed upon him. He, therefore, submitted to being bearded because he dared not resent it as he should have liked to do.

"You will take the saddles and bridles, of course, for they will be of no use to us, now that you take our horses. But you have not *all* of the ponies."

The officer glanced sharply around and up the slope, showing he had mistaken the meaning of Maris Royden's words.

"Captain Lawton and his men have a number of animals somewhere among the

mountains; if you make diligent search you may find them; then you can try to take them away from the Captain."

For the first time during this snappy conversation, the young man indulged in a smile, which was more exasperating to the officer than uproarious laughter would have been.

In this interchange of biting personalities, it flashed upon the Major that he had an opening for a shot that would hurt.

"If as you say the Apaches are among the mountains, not far off, why are *you three* lingering here instead of hunting for them?"

"We are here by order of Captain Lawton; he directed us to wait in this place with the animals until he and his troops crossed the spur. We are expecting to hear from him at any minute now. It will hardly do for you and your men to be within reach when he learns our story. The Captain has a bad temper."

"We hold the Americans in no more fear than we do the raiding Apaches, whom we shall drive across the border back to their

Reservation where you are not able to make them stay longer than they choose."

"I don't think I should linger if I were in your place," coolly remarked Maris, turning his gaze to one side, as if looking for the coming of his friends.

Incredible as it may seem, this "bluff" worked well. Taking their cue from their commander, several of the troopers rounded up the ponies that had been captured from Geronimo and his band, including the three referred to, and started them at a brisk gait southward along the base of the foothills.

"Have a care!" called Maris; "there may be two or three hostiles lurking among the foothills, and they are likely to attack you."

If Major Torreon heard the taunt he gave no evidence of it. He and his troop continued riding briskly away, with the captured animals trotting in front, as if no such things as heat or thirst existed in the wide world.

Maris Roydon stood looking after them for some minutes. Then he suddenly wheeled, gnashed his teeth and flung his hat upon the ground.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the puzzled Bob Goodale.

"I'm mad through and through! I could bite a ten-penny nail in two; I was never so wrought up in my life."

"Inasmuch as to when?" asked the grinning Bob. And then Maris summed up what had passed between him and the Mexican officer.

"We both saw you were excited over something."

"Yes," added the Corporal, "and when they took our ponies, we had a pretty good idea of what you were quarreling about, but, Cap, weren't you a trifle impudent?" asked Billy, with a quizzical grimace.

"I meant to be; Mexico has plenty of good soldiers and officers, but Major Torreon is one of the poorest among all that are pretending to hunt the hostiles; his greatest fear is that he may find them. Well, we are afoot again, and, Corporal, what is to be done?"

"Things ain't in the best shape; it's pretty well along in the afternoon and there's one thing we can make up our minds has been settled."

"What's that?"

"Geronimo and his Apaches have plunged deeper into the Sierra Madres; if they had gone over this spur, they would have reached the plain long ago and we should have heard from Captain Lawton."

"I am sure you are right," assented Bob, "and that brings us back to the question—what shall we do?"

"Do you want my advice?"

"That's what I asked."

"Now, you chaps aren't enlisted in the service, and, therefore, can do as you blamed please; I advise you to make your way through the mountains as fast as you can, and keep going till you strike the railroad that runs from Guaymas to Benson. If you have enough money, buy tickets straight through to Benson, and from that point it will be easy to reach home."

"Strange to say, there's a little sense in that advice, but in one way Bob and I enlisted for the war; I feel like seeing it through."

"The same here," added Bob.

"I think Captain Lawton can worry along without you two, though he will sure

miss you when the round-up comes, but how do you expect to find your way back to his command?"

"Don't *you* expect to do so?"

"It's different with me; I daresn't play the deserter."

"You make the journey to Benson with us claiming that you had gotten lost from the command and were hunting for him."

The Corporal shook his head.

"The only place to look for Captain Lawton, as everybody knows, is where the greatest danger is; such an excuse would make me the laughing stock of the army."

"If then you start out to search for Lawton, we can help you."

"I don't think I'd object," said the genial fellow, "being as we have got along fairly well so far."

Maris impulsively reached out his hand.

"Billy, you're the best fellow that ever lived."

"So say we all of us," joined Bob, heartily. The Corporal was touched. He had formed long before a strong liking for the boys. He admired their pluck, and unsel-

fishness, and his heart had been won by their appreciation of his little Molly.

"Sometimes I'm sure I don't amount to much," he added, swallowing a lump which crept up his throat, "but when I think of her, why I feel like trying to be somebody."

He quickly pulled himself together.

"The first thing to do is to place ourselves outside of them rations we fetched with us. Señor Morelos keeps good cattle, though it isn't the best time of the season; the slice I swiped is pretty well broiled and I believe you have a bit of hardtack, Bob."

The three passed up stream to where it was clear and unroiled. There they sat down and ate the liberal lunch. Maris suggested that a portion should be laid aside for their next meal, but the Corporal pooh-poohed the idea.

"We ain't likely to starve in this part of the world, even if General Miles can't always get his pack-trains through. We don't crave food in hot weather like we do when it's cold, and we can stand another twenty-four hours without trouble. There's only one thing that worries me more than something to eat."

"What's that?"

"Water; we've been mighty lucky so fur —luckier than we're likely to be for the next few days; so let's fill up to our necks."

They swallowed every drop they could hold—so much, indeed, that all felt uncomfortable.

"I've heard that a camel carries a barrel inside of him which he fills with water, when he starts on a tramp," observed the Corporal; "after a week or two, when he feels thirsty, he lets down a bucket and fetches up all the water he wants. Now, that's what I call powerful handy."

"Nature has fitted him for traveling over the desert, where days pass without bringing a sight of spring or well."

"Why don't they bring a lot of camels to Arizona and New Mexico and turn 'em loose to breed?"

"They tried it just before the war, but the experiment didn't work. The animals wandered off and went wild. The better plan for the United States is to irrigate such regions as are like this part of Sonora,

and you can make up your mind that sooner or later that will be done."

"Well, young men, I feel we have room left for four or five more drops; so let's swallow 'em and be off."

CHAPTER XV.

GROPING FOR THE TRAIL.

DESPITE the improbability of such a thing, it was possible after all that Geronimo and his band had pushed or were pushing their way across the mountain spur to the comparatively level country beyond. They might have made a stand somewhere in the wild region and were holding their pursuers at bay. If so, the delay was accounted for.

Such a veteran as Corporal Billy Bidwell did not lose sight of this, even though he had declared it proved that the raiders had plunged deeper into the Sierra Madres. While the three were moving along the base of the foothills, the Corporal leading and Bob Goodale at the rear, they heard the report of a rifle. In the some moment all stopped and listened. Bob pointed toward

the loftier ranges to explain the point whence the sound came. His companions nodded by way of agreement.

"How far off?" asked Maris.

"Less than a mile; the noise of a gun doesn't sound loud in such sultry weather, and where the rocks help smother the noise."

"There's no way of telling whether it was fired by a white or a red man?"

"I should say not, being as both use the same kind of guns—that is most of the time—hello! there's something else."

It should have been explained that while the general course of the Sierra Madres Mountains is north and south, their numerous spurs show every turn of the compass. The ridge across which Captain Lawton had started that morning in pursuit of the raiding Apaches runs almost due east and west. Two miles to the south a similar spur thrust out, though it was of less extent It displayed one peak that must have towered to a height of a half mile in the burning sky. About two-thirds of the way up this elevation, which showed a soft, bluish tint, a signal fire was burning. The thin figure of

smoke which tapered upward had a wavy, ribbon-like form. There could be no doubt that it had been kindled by Apaches, and carried some message for Geronimo and his band.

But what did it mean?

That was a question which Corporal Bidwell with all his acumen and training could not answer. One phase of the matter was perplexing.

"Now, if General Miles had been allowed to put up his heliograph stations in Sonora, that peak yonder would have been the best place for one of 'em, but there isn't a thing of the kind. I don't understand how any of Geronimo's bucks could have reached that place and set the fire going in the time since they were started off this morning."

Maris unslung his field glass and pointed it at the feathery finger of vapor on the butte. The others waited for him to speak.

"I make out two persons," said he, with the glass still to his eyes; "one is standing up and the other sitting or reclining on the ground."

"Are they Indians?"

"So far as I can judge they are."

"It gets me how any of Geronimo's band managed that sort of thing."

Maris abruptly turned upon his companions.

"They are Yaqui Indians; this is their country; they may not be at war with Mexico just at present, but they have given the *rurales* plenty of work to do, and President Diaz isn't through with them yet."

"You're right; the Yaquis are as good fighters, if not better than the Apaches; they can't help wishing Geronimo well, because he is fighting white men."

It will be noted that the three were standing on the open plain, far enough from the broken ground of the foothills to be in plain sight of the couple that had started the signal fire. No doubt the Yaquis were studying the whites as closely as the latter were studying them.

Bob Goodale took the glass and pointed it at the butte.

"That's queer," he remarked a minute later; "I don't see either one of them."

"It must be they have finished what they set out to do," suggested the Corporal.

Bidwell made use of the glass, but the strangers were no longer to be seen. Leaving the instrument with his friends, Maris Roydon gave his attention to the elevation, believing they were not through with the couple.

"Corporal," he suddenly said, "turn the glass toward that long, low flat rock at the bottom of the butte. It seems to me something is moving there."

"You hit it that time," replied Bidwell; "the Yaquis have come down the slope and it looks as if they intend to make us a call. Maris, can you talk the Yaqui lingo?" asked the Corporal, with a grin.

"I never heard a word of it."

"It must have some resemblance to Mexican or Spanish; watch 'em."

Having reached the base of the butte, the Indians, upon whom the attention of our friends was centred, did not slacken their pace, but came across the sandy plain toward the trio who watched them with no little interest.

They were seen to be tall; each must have

been six feet in height; they were dressed much like the Apaches, with the red turban-like band around the forehead, blue shirts and moccasins, though the garments were so soiled and worn that it was hard to tell their original color. In fact the youths might have believed after all that they were Apaches but for the insistence of Corporal Bidwell.

"If you look close there's a difference," he said.

There *was* a difference, though not one of the three could describe it. The assertion of the Corporal could not be questioned.

Thus our friends stood with their eyes upon the couple who were coming toward them at a dignified gait. Their steps were not rapid, but so long that they approached faster than would be supposed. A little more than a hundred yards separated the parties when an astounding thing took place.

The grim warriors without the least outcry or word that could be overheard, abruptly halted, brought their rifles to a level and deliberately fired both weapons at the little party. Their act was like that of two

well disciplined soldiers at the command of an officer.

There could be no mistake as to the meaning of the Yaquis, for Corporal Bidwell felt the whizz of a bullet in front of his eyes, and the other nipped the hat band of Bob Goodale. Having discharged their guns, the Yaquis, holding their places, began deliberately reloading for the purpose of completing their crime. Their guns were not repeaters, but they knew how to use them.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" exclaimed the amazed Corporal; "let's show 'em they ain't the only ones that understand *that* business."

The three could ask for no better excuse. Not only had a cold blooded attempt been made upon their lives, but it was about to be repeated. The Corporal was the first to fire, and he did not miss. The Yaqui who was standing a little in front of his companion uttered a startled half-shriek, stopped loading his weapon, and wheeling about started on a run for the butte from which he had advanced so vauntingly. His comrade did the same, observing which the boys held their fire.

"No need of shooting when both are half-scared to death," remarked Maris, lowering his gun.

The one that had been winged by Corporal Bidwell limped a good deal, though he seemed to make as good progress as if unhurt.

"I ought to stop your running for good," growled Bidwell; "what way is that of saying good-day to strangers."

But no more shots were fired and a few minutes later, the two Yaquis disappeared among the foothills and were not seen again.

"That's the queerest performance I ever seen in Sonora," remarked the Corporal; "before this we never took the Yaquis into account when we were chasing the hostiles, but it looks as if we've got to reckon with 'em."

"I don't think that particular couple will bother us again; it would be worth a good deal to know what they said by means of that signal fire. Perhaps there may be a reply."

But, although the three scanned every portion of the peaks and mountain range to the left, they saw nothing that could have

been meant as an answer to the first. Whether such was expected by the Yaquis could not be known.

"Now," said the Corporal, as Maris slung the field glass over his shoulder, and they resumed their course along the base of the foothills; "if we expect to join Captain Lawton, we've got to do it by diving in among the mountains. Here's where Geronimo and his bucks would have come out, if they kept to the course they started on."

More than an hour of daylight remained, when they dived among the rocks and began what looked like a hopeless quest for the trailers. They might have to tramp hundreds of miles before coming up with them; they might miss them altogether; for, as has already been explained, the trail of the raiders crossed and recrossed and doubled upon itself, so that their pursuers frequently passed over the same ground twice and in some instances three times.

General Miles' theory was being worked out with a vengeance. We recall that he declared before entering upon the final campaign that no man or animal can stand being persistently hunted without any rest be-

ing given him. When all sanctuary is denied, he will sooner or later, throw up his hands. No race is superior to or the equal of the Caucasion, when the chances are the same. Marvelous as were the exploits of many of those dusky raiders, they were no more marvelous than what was done by those who ran them down.

The Sierra Madres had long been looked upon as an inaccessible retreat for the hostiles, and such it had proved to be. When Geronimo and his intolerable miscreants found matters growing too hot for them in Sonora, they took to these mountains and laughed at pursuit. That is to say they did so until the campaigns of 1885 and '6. We know that when Lieutenant Maus routed the raiders from the Devil's Backbone, that leader revised his opinion of matters.

But Corporal Bidwell had decided to put forth every effort to rejoin his command. Bob and Maris were to be his companions in the attempt, and right glad he was that such was the fact. Accordingly, the three began their uncertain journey by picking their way among the rocks and stunted growth of the foothills, all the time climb-

ing up, up as they expected to keep on doing until they struck the trail of the pursuers and pursued. It was to be supposed that Captain Lawton and his scouts would stick to the track of Geronimo no matter how devious it proved, while it would not be difficult for the Corporal to fall in behind his friends, provided he could cross the course, and so long as he had daylight to help him.

The problem after all did not seem so difficult as at first. The Corporal's plan was to make his way into the mountains until he crossed the path of the trailers and then follow that up until he overtook his friends.

The possibilities of failure in this attempt lay in the uncertainty of the course taken by the hostiles. If they had kept straight on over the mountain spur until near the plain on the further side, then Bidwell was quite sure to cross their line of flight, for he was striving to follow a path at right angles to the same. On the other hand, it might be Geronimo had made an abrupt change in his route, soon after leaving camp. If such were the fact, the hunt by our friends must be a long one, for the

approaching night would stop the search until the return of daylight.

Corporal Bidwell had led the way up the slope and into the mountains, alert for signs of enemies, when he was abruptly halted by the last cause he would have expected at such a time and in such a place.

It was the noise of a sneeze!

There could be no mistaking it. It came from some point near at hand. Bidwell dropped beside the nearest boulder as if he had been shot, and Maris and Bob were scarcely a second behind him in doing the same.

"Sh! don't stir," warned their guide, in a whisper.

More experienced than they, he had noted the spot whence came the startling sound. Removing his hat, he cautiously peered over. Less than two rods distant, a stocky Apache buck was making his way down the slope, his course such that he was likely to pass within a few paces of where the three crouched.

The Corporal's first thought was that the warrior was one of their own scouts. His face showed clearly, since it was turned to-

ward the Corporal, who quickly saw that he was a stranger. Such being the fact, it proved he belonged to Geronimo's band.

The Corporal was watching him as closely as he dared, when the Apache abruptly stopped, opened his mouth, screwed up his face, closed his eyes and emitted another sneeze which shook him like an earthquake. The explosion was instantly followed by a third, but this time the victim spread his jaws so far apart that only a gasping sound followed. It would seem that he ought to have taken this precaution in the first place, but he must have believed there was no need of doing so.

Corporal Bidwell sank lower so that he no longer saw the Apache. He was so near and coming nearer all the time that he would have discovered the white man had he continued to peep over the boulder.

But with all his woodcraft and cunning, the Indian passed the boulder behind which the three were screening themselves and moved down the slope, without so much as a glance to the right or left.

This could not have occurred had the circumstances been different. The Apache had

no thought that any whites were near him, and, therefore, took no precautions.

Having passed the trio, his back was toward them, though he was liable to look behind him at any moment. Again the Corporal took off his hat and raised his head high enough to watch the buck, who soon passed from sight. His action showed he had no companion, and Bidwell did not hesitate to rise upright, signifying to his companions to do the same.

"Well, now, wasn't that a queer piece of bus'ness?" he asked of the boys.

"It's the first time I ever heard an Indian sneeze," was the comment of Bob Goodale.

"They're human beings, and now and then catch cold like the rest of us."

"I have heard that *la grippe,* as they call it, has been fatal to many red men," said Maris; "it is another name for influenza or cold; I shouldn't be surprised if that's the trouble with this fellow. Where do you suppose he is going, Corporal?"

"He has been sent by Geronimo to learn what has become of the ponies Captain Lawton captured from them. I don't imagine he can do anything, but it may be the chief

fancies he may have a chance to get the animals back."

"Suppose the Mexicans hadn't taken the horses from us?"

"This buck might have raised the mischief; he wouldn't have come sneezing, so as to give fair notice, but would have sneaked up and shot one of us at least, before the others would have dreamed that danger was near."

"It looks as if it may prove a good thing after all that Major Torreon robbed us of our property," said Maris; "for it has saved us from *that* danger."

"No thanks to him," growled the Corporal, whose memory of the despoiling was anything but pleasant; "well, let us keep moving."

The obscurity of approaching night was already stealing through the solitude, when the task of hunting for the trail was resumed. The incident just described was not lost upon Corporal Bidwell. Geronimo might have sent more than one buck—though it was not probable—upon the same errand.

It was not long after this that the Cor-

poral abruptly paused, raising his hand for his companions to do the same. His face was aglow when he cautiously exclaimed:

"Jiminy! we've struck the trail, as sure as we're alive!"

CHAPTER XVI.

PARTIAL PAYMENT.

WHEN Captain Lawton again took up the pursuit of Geronimo and his hostiles, he pushed it with the grim energy shown during the flaming weeks that had gone by. Tremendously powerful, this giant man and model officer seemed absolutely tireless. Not one of the veteran scouts or officers could do the work which he did with little sign of fatigue. General Miles was fortunate in securing Lawton to carry out his campaign against the murderous desperadoes, when they jumped the Reservation and swept through Arizona and Sonora like a cyclone.

Mortal men could not have done more than those scouts and troopers, who caught the contagion from their wonderful leader. They suffered tortures of thirst, were gaunt and famished, wore off their moccasins until

barefoot, were often drenched at night by the tropical downpour, but they still pressed on like automata. The rocks which they touched seemed to bake them, and the metal of their weapons blistered their hands.

Following the general rule, the most experienced scouts led, sometimes at a distance of a half mile or more in advance, with others scouting the solitudes on the right and the left. No artifice of the raiders could throw their pursuers off the track. It was on, on, forever on, with no rest by night or day. The end must come by-and-bye, for the limit of human endurance was at hand.

Our old acquaintance, Arak had shown himself an unsurpassable scout. Few or none could equal him. He entered the service under Captain Crawford with a cloud of suspicion over him, but he had brushed it away long before. Captain Lawton gave him his full confidence, and accepted his reports without question. His fame was known to Geronimo, whose hatred of his countryman was unspeakable.

It fell to the lot of Arak to scout well to the right of the line of pursuit. He did not believe from the first that Geronimo would

hold to a direct course across the mountain spur, for the trailers were too close upon him. He would dive deeper into the wild solitude, with which he was familiar, in the fruitless effort to baffle his pursuers.

Thus it came about that on the afternoon of the day in which we are interested, Arak was alone. He had drifted far over, but clung like a bloodhound to his task. He kept up his hunt with the marvelous skill which was a part of his nature when engaged upon such delicate and dangerous work.

With not a living animal or person in sight, Arak was gliding like a shadow among the rocks and boulders, steadily climbing and pushing onward, when his acute ear caught a signal. It was a soft, tremulous whistle, which few in his situation would have noticed, but he stopped like a flash and listened.

The almost inaudible sound fluttered again to his ear. He recognized it as a call which his countrymen often used when hunting. He replied with a whistle that was like an echo of the other.

From a point fifty rods distant an Apache warrior stepped into sight. He was short,

stocky and of powerful build, like most of his tribe, and Arak recognized him at the first glance as one of the raiders, known as Ziddah. He was a well-known warrior and one of the most murderous of Geronimo's band.

The keen eye of the scout instantly noted that something was wrong with the Apache. He limped, walked evidently with pain, and when he found he had caught the attention of Arak, he leaned against the nearest boulder, as if he found it hard to stand upright. He kept his black eyes fixed upon the scout, who walked toward him, his rifle grasped like one not quite satisfied with the situation.

"What is the matter?" asked Arak, halting a few paces away.

"Ziddah is ill; he has been hurt," replied the other, who slumped down to the ground, with his back against the boulder upon which he had been leaning. These two had hunted many times together, and three years before were companions on one of the most ferocious raids in which Geronimo ever engaged. But Ziddah remained the demon he had always been, while Arak turned a sharp cor-

ner in his career, and became the matchless scout of Lieutenant Maus and Captain Lawton.

A sick Indian is a rare sight. Generally when one of them rolls on the ground and groans and begs for relief, it is because he has been gorging himself almost to death. Geronimo often suffered because of his gluttony. Such, however, was not the trouble with Ziddah, as Arak was quick to perceive.

"How were you hurt?" asked Arak, drawing near the other, who decided to speak of himself in the first person.

"I was climbing the rocks, beside Natchez, when a stone turned under my moccasin and I fell a long way. I was so nearly killed that Natchez wished to thrust his knife into me to end my suffering. Geronimo thought it best he should do so, for it would delay them too much to carry me. I begged them to leave me alone; perhaps your people would pass me by. They did so and I was left alone."

"What can I do to help you?" asked Arak, in turn, not liking the prospect of being hindered in his work.

"I know of nothing, unless you take my surrender."

Arak was astonished by this extraordinary remark. It was not his place to accept the submission of anyone. He could conduct Ziddah to Captain Lawton, but he knew the commander did not want to be bothered at this stage of the proceedings with prisoners unless they included Geronimo or Natchez.

"If you stay here no one may see you; after we have passed and you are strong enough, you can go to your friends."

"My friends will be far away."

"Why doesn't Geronimo surrender?" abruptly asked Arak.

"He is not quite ready, but will soon do so."

"How can you know that?"

"I have heard him and Natchez talk together; they feel that they cannot hold out a great deal longer; Captain Lawton does not give us any time to rest."

"Where are they heading for?"

"They will go back to the Reservation."

"But they will have to surrender when they do that," said Arak, impatiently; "why

do they put off the hour when they must yield?"

"Geronimo is afraid Captain Lawton will kill him for what he has done."

"The white men do not kill their prisoners; if there is any danger of that, the longer Geronimo waits the worse it will be for him."

Ziddah admitted that what his old acquaintance said was good logic, but it was Geronimo to whom the arguments should be addressed.

Finally the hostile suggested to Arak that inasmuch as the trailers were so close upon the hostiles, Arak could well afford to rest awhile.

"Your moccasins are worn off your feet," he said to the scout, who had seated himself on the ground in front of him; "you have done much hard climbing, and there is no need for haste on your part."

"I must not be found at the rear when we halt at night; Captain Lawton counts much upon what I tell him."

There was a touch of pride in this truthful declaration. Not only did Arak receive

good pay as he viewed it for his services as scout, but Captain Lawton had shown appreciation of his skill by making him several valuable presents. These were generally in the form of money, which is always acceptable to the red man, but the finest prize the scout had ever received, was given to him only two days before. This was a superb hunting knife, with a handle of finely ornamented silver. The blade was as fine as if of Damascus steel and the dusky face glowed with pride as he drew out the weapon and held it up for the inspection of the other. Ziddah reached his hand to take it, but Arak shook his head and shoved it back into the girdle at his waist. The prize was too precious to pass from his possession even for a few minutes.

"Shall we not rest awhile?" asked Ziddah, who, trying to hide his pain, carefully adjusted his body so as to make his position as easy as he could.

Arak had not thought of doing anything of this nature, but he reflected that the opportunity could not be better. No scout attached to Captain Lawton's command had

done harder work than he all though the fervid days. He had climbed precipices, lowered himself into gorges and surpassed his own race in real progress.

The labors had brought about a peculiar situation. Arak had gone closer to the plain beyond the mountain spur than any of his companions. Then when the turn was made he was thrown well out on the flank of the trailers. This left him comparatively alone, pursuers and pursued being far over to the right. There was no immediate call for further work by him, and he decided to loaf for an hour or so. He could wake at any moment previously fixed in his mind, while judging Ziddah from his condition he was not likely to sleep at all. The rest, however, could not fail to do him good.

"I will sleep until the sun is yonder in the sky," said Arak, indicating a point which the orb would reach in the course of an hour.

"And I shall do the same," added Ziddah, who again shifted his position until he seemed to find one that was quite comfortable.

Those hardy, toughened Apaches were like wild animals. Untidy to the last degree, they lived almost wholly in the open. Gifted by nature with prodigious lung power, their endurance at times was incredible. They would go twenty-four hours or even longer without food or drink, and seem not to suffer the slightest discomfort therefrom. Arak lay flat on his back, with his serpent-like eyes upturned to the brassy heavens, and five minutes later was as sound asleep as he had ever been in his life.

Just before his eyelids fell he glanced across at Ziddah. He must have found a pleasant pose for he was breathing as softly as an infant.

For fifteen minutes not the slightest change took place. At the end of that time, Ziddah, without stirring limb or body, opened his eyes. His head shifted over an inch or so and this gave him a full view of the face of the scout. He saw that he was unconscious, and if not disturbed would remain thus for an hour at least to come.

A few more minutes passed and then without the slightest rustling, Ziddah rose to the sitting posture. His gaze was fixed

upon the sleeping Arak and his senses were keyed to the tensest point.

It may as well be said that the injuries of the malignant Apache were all pretence. There was nothing the matter with him. He had played and was still playing a trick upon Arak, and it looked as if he had succeeded.

Ziddah was the emissary or agent of Geronimo, whose hatred of the friendly scout led him to form this desperate scheme for his destruction. Ziddah purposely fell behind and claimed to be so disabled by his accident that he could not "keep up with the procession."

The natural inquiry would be as to why Ziddah, such being his purpose, did not lie in wait somewhere in the mountains and pick off the daring scout. Possibly he might have done so, but the risk was too great. In the first place, he would have to outwit Arak, and that was anything but an easy task. Arak was as likely to detect his presence in the neighborhood as Ziddah was to discover him, in which event it was quite sure to prove a bad thing for Ziddah.

He preferred to act out his perfidious nature. He would pretend to be hurt and

maintain the farce until he won the confidence of Arak. That being secured, the opportunity he was seeking was sure to come.

Again, why did not Ziddah shoot his host when asleep? No method could have been quicker or more effective. It certainly would have wound up the career of the famous scout, but it was sure to be risky, to a greater or less degree, to the treacherous wretch himself. There was no saying how near other scouts were. The report of the rifle would be certain to draw attention, and it was not impossible that Ziddah would find himself in a net from which he could not escape.

The knife is silent. He could drive it with such quickness and power that the scout would have no time to utter an outcry. Clearly that was the weapon of all others.

A space of less than fifteen feet separated the two Apaches. That interval could be crossed without the "shadow" of a noise. The deep slumber of Arak would not be disturbed. In the twinkling of an eye, as may be said, the terrible warrior would wake up in the spirit land, where he would be beyond

the power of inflicting further injury upon his own race.

With the silent grace of an athlete, Ziddah drew his feet under his body and rose to a crouching posture. His formidable knife had been drawn from its nestling place in his girdle, and the rifle reclined against the boulder which had supported his body when he slid down in seeming helplessness to the ground.

In order to complete the dreadful deed, it was necessary not only for Ziddah to deliver the blow, but to make a safe get-away for himself. So far as he knew, none of the hostiles was within a fourth of a mile of him. The main body was much farther off. He was likely to be discovered, even if his deed were unsuspected, before he could pass out of the dangerous neighborhood.

Withdrawing his gaze from the face of Arak, the stooping form peered here, there and in every direction. At the first glance the coast seemed to be clear, but something well over to the right caught his eye, and caused him to close his grip more firmly on the knife, while he crouched so low that he

could barely peep over the top of the boulder.

It so happened that when this disturbing flicker appeared in the field of vision, Ziddah was not looking at the point where it showed. He became conscious of such an interference without being able to identify it.

For five minutes he scrutinized the spot, but saw nothing unusual. That it did not show again he regarded as favorable. He knew that if it were an enemy thus near, he had not discovered the presence of Ziddah, for the latter had been too guarded in what he did to betray himself.

The same objection was to be noted against its being a deer or other wild animal, or possibly a bird, hopping over the ground in quest of food, for if a creature of that nature had shown itself once, what reason could there be for its hiding again?

The situation was puzzling to the Apache, who debated some minutes as to what he ought to do. The disturbing feature of the business was that if one of the scouts was in the vicinity, Ziddah would have hard work to avoid a collision with him after commit-

ting the crime that had brought him within the lines of the enemy. He did not like such a prospect, for though he would fight fiercely when driven into a corner, he was less courageous than many of his comrades.

But he had to decide one way or the other. He might lie down and feign sleep, counting upon a better opportunity quite soon, though even that meant an increase of the personal danger to himself. Finally he reached his decision.

He straightened up, turned his burning gaze upon the sleeping Arak, and began stealing like a shadow toward him.

Half the distance was passed, when he was transfixed by the command:

"Stop where you are or you're a dead Indian!"

CHAPTER XVII.

IN THE SIERRA MADRES.

THE Apache stood for an instant as if petrified. He was stealing upon his victim, his knife rigidly gripped, his senses on edge, when through the hot hush came the startling command.

The Indian turned his head like a flash and saw from behind the rock, where the flicker had appeared, the form of a white youth, revealed just enough to show that he held his rifle leveled at the Apache. All that the other had to do was to press the trigger a little harder, and pouf! that would be the last of Ziddah.

The sight threw the buck into a wild panic. Without pausing to snatch up his gun, he broke away at headlong speed. Like the Digger Indian in his terror, he leaped from side to side, ducked his head and

dodged and cavorted in his grotesque efforts to distract the aim of his enemy.

But Bob Goodale did not fire. He and his companions had separated while trying to follow the trail of their friends, and Providence gave him a glimpse of the Indian as he was stealing upon his intended victim. Maris Roydon and Corporal Bidwell were too far to the left to know what was going on.

Bob did not fully comprehend the situation for a minute or two. He saw that the Apache was creeping upon an Indian who was lying down, either wounded or asleep. The youth had no suspicion of the identity of the one unconscious of his danger, but his sense of chivalry was roused. He could not permit so cowardly a crime to be committed, and he interfered in the nick of time.

Many a man in Bob's situation would have been instant to shoot the Apache, who could not have eluded his aim, but neither of the youths was capable of a thing of that kind. It was too cold-blooded, and the necessity did not exist.

It took Ziddah but a few minutes to make

himself invisible. Bob kept him covered until he vanished and then he walked forward. He had not yet reached the spot, when to his amazement, Arak leaped to his feet and stared around as if he was also mystified, as was the case. The frenzied flight of Ziddah, when all caution was thrown aside, awoke the scout, who watched the approach of the smiling Bob.

"I'm going in for Volapuk," said the boy; "how handy it would come in now when neither of us can understand what the other says!"

"Well, Arak," he added, extending his hand to the scout, who gingerly accepted it; "it looks to me as if I couldn't have arrived at a better time. I am glad to find you so well, and hope your health will continue good."

And then how the Apache chattered! He swung his arms, pointed in the direction taken by Ziddah, made other gestures which had no meaning to Bob Goodale, who could only nod his head and smile and says, "All right."

Suddenly Arak caught up the gun which Ziddah had left behind him. He turned it

over, scrutinized it carefully, said something to the youth, shook his head and set the weapon down again. His next action was to emit a quavering whoop, so clear and muscial, that the sound must have gone a considerable distance.

The result was more than Arak himself expected. Hardly was there time for a reply to reach him, when Jose Maria, the interpreter, loomed to view, and rapidly approached the couple. Maris Roydon and Corporal Bidwell appeared almost at the same moment from another direction. Thus the five friends came together.

Bob Goodale related what had occurred, Jose showing keen interest. With his help the conversation became general. Arak explained what is already known to my readers. Jose grinned and kept nodding his head.

"What did I tell you, Arak? He pretended he was hurt so as to deceive you; he was sent by Geronimo to kill you; I warned you of your danger."

"I never knew an Apache to do that kind of thing," replied the scout, not a little chagrined over his slip.

"You ought to have learned long ago that there isn't anything they won't do if you give them the chance."

Arak turned resentfully upon Bob Goodale.

"Why didn't you shoot him?"

"He hadn't hurt me," replied the youth, who was so pleased over the close of the incident that he could not forbear "guying" the scout.

"He tried to kill me," said Arak.

"Well, why didn't *you* shoot him? You have a gun and he left his behind for you; it must have been he wanted you to show what you could do in the way of markmanship."

"He ran so fast I did not get the chance."

"He did skip lively, that's a fact, but he was with you for a considerable time before that."

As Jose translated the words that flashed back and forth, he chuckled. He knew how proud Arak was of his skill and subtlety when dealing with the hostiles, and he was glad to see the fellow fairly caught.

For some minutes the face of the scout wore its usual sulleness. But he knew who

had saved his life, and though his friend persisted in doing it like a white man, instead of showing no mercy to the wretch, Arak was not lacking in gratitude. The strangest thing the others had ever seen took place, when Bob Goodale reached over and jammed the ribs of the Apache with his knuckles. He actually grinned!

"Ask him, Jose, if he remembers when he pulled me out of the pit, and when he saved me from being shot while we were passing through Baserac."

And then as Arak nodded, he grinned again, but instantly became so sour that it looked as if he were ashamed of his temporary weakness. He began searching through the pockets of his clothes. The others watched him wonderingly. By-and-bye he fished out two silver quarter dollars, which he handed to Bob Goodale.

"What does he mean by that?" asked the youth of Jose.

"He says he does it in return for the favor you did him a little while ago."

"It is all simple enough," interposed Maris Roydon; "Arak doesn't really mean to pay you for that service, but he wishes to

correct a mistake you made over the other matter."

"What's that?"

"You gave him ten dollars for saving your life twice; you paid him too much; the value he sets on your existence is four dollars and seventy-five cents. He hands you the change; I think he is quite liberal."

"You've hit it undoubtedly," commented Corporal Bidwell; "I don't go much on the looks of Arak—don't repeat that, Jose—but you can't turn up your nose at his honesty."

"If that is what he's driving at," said Bob, "why don't he pay me for the price he sets on his *own* precious self? I should like to know how much that is."

"He has paid you tenfold what you paid him," insisted Maris.

"How do you make that out?"

"He has given you every cent he owns in the world; you gave him only a half of your possessions; it's a case of the widow's mite."

"It doesn't look to me as if I had many friends in this crowd," replied Bob, who compelled Arak to take back the silver; "we

are liable any day to run across one of these Mexican towns, and Arak will want to buy mescal or tiswin. Make clear to him, Jose, that I shall be glad to act as his banker until this business is over."

But the interpreter did not quite grasp the meaning of this assurance. Bob explained:

"I have been able to act only once in Arak's favor; he did it twice for me; I consider myself still in his debt; when he feels the need of money, I wish him to let me know. However, it will be just as well if he applies to Maris, who ought to be willing to give up."

"I learned to pretend that long ago," said the good natured Maris; "Arak can feel certain that I shall be glad to do anything in my power for him, and he can't apply too often to me. But I should like to ask if the plan is for us to spend the night here."

As Arak and Jose led the way, with the others stringing after, it was fast growing dark around them. In the company of two such veterans, the Corporal and his young

friends gave themselves no concern about the hostiles. It would be safe to say that whatever escaped the scout and the interpreter was not likely to be discernible to the whites.

The course was rough and very difficult. It recalled to the youths their experience when trailing Geronimo with Lieutenant Maus, for there were precipitous climbs to be made, deep ravines and gorges to be threaded, and twice they had to cross water. The streams, however, were not deep though angry and swift. It gave an opportunity to drink—something which one is able to do, if opportunity offered, all the time one is laboring through a semi-tropical country.

And all the time, the party were ascending. They were well in among the Sierra Madres, where they might wander for days and weeks before reaching the less broken country beyond. Although there were occasional descents, where in the gloom one had to feel his way, yet the climbing more than outbalanced these depressions.

Maris and Bob wondered how Arak and Jose could keep the trail, when at times the

gloom shut out their forms, but those tough frontiersmen advanced with the certainty they would have shown had the sun been shining in the sky. That they were not astray was proved when about nine o'clock, the gleam of a fire was caught, and a few minutes later the five descended into a broad, shallow ravine, where most of the scouts and troopers had camped for the night.

Their coming had been detected by those who carefully guarded every approach. The men carried enough rations to serve for two or three days should it prove necessary. The slaughter of the beeves of Juan Morelos that morning was in the nature of a treat to the trailers. By indulging it they helped to make their supplies last.

Near a fire kindled at one side of the low valley lounged Captain Lawton, Captain Wood and several officers. Most of them were smoking, and all were so tired from the day's march that the rest was most welcome to them. They had not been able to employ an animal throughout the day. Although the stock were a goodly number of miles distant under guard, there could be no telling

when they would be able to make use of them. So long as the hostiles stayed within the mountains, the horses and mules were useless.

After greetings and a lunch, Corporal Bidwell reported to Captain Lawton the loss of the herd, including the three belonging to himself and the young men.

"That Mexican officer had his nerve with him," commented Lawton, "but I don't see that he has gained anything."

When asked for an explanation of this remark, the grim soldier gave it.

"The Apaches will take them away from the Mexicans again, for you can make up your minds the raiders won't consent to be unmounted long."

This statement proved partly true. Although nothing, so far as we know, was ever heard of the animals stolen from our friends, it was not long after that the hostiles captured a Mexican pack-train and continued their raid with better mounts than before.

While our friends were on their way to Captain Lawton's camp, Jose had taken occasion to tell them that Arak dreaded to have the Captain know he had been out-

witted by Ziddah, with his consequent narrow escape from death. The Corporal and the youths hastened to assure Jose that they would not drop a hint of the incident to the leader of the expedition nor to anyone else. This pledge was very agreeable to the scout who valued the good opinion of Captain Lawton above that of all others. So that officer never heard a word of the slip. Had he known every particular, he would have esteemed Arak none the less.

Every one of the group felt a sympathetic touch when the Captain summoned Arak to his side and began questioning him through the interpreter.

"How far off do you believe the hostiles are?"

"From what the scouts say, it is five or six miles; they are that much deeper in the mountains."

"Where do you think they are heading for?"

"I wish I could tell you, but Geronimo himself does not know; I believe they will keep in the Sierra Madres till they have tried further to throw us off their trail."

"They must have learned long ago that they cannot do *that.*"

"True, but Geronimo and Natchez hate to give up to the white men."

"None the less, *they have got to do it!*" exclaimed the Captain, with a strong expletive; "we have fooled with them long enough; we are in earnest now; I wish we could keep up the pursuit all night."

"It would be good if we could, but the Indians will make many turns and when daylight came, we should find we had lost more miles than we had gained."

"You are right about that, Arak, as you always are about such things; if I had a hundred men like you I shouldn't ask better fun than to run down ever one of that gang, but there is only one Arak in the Southwest."

Where could you have found a prouder man than Arak, when Jose Maria translated this generous praise, in a voice as loud as Captain Lawton's, so that not one in the group lost a word?

CHAPTER XVIII.

A QUICK PASSAGE.

THAT night the windows of heaven were opened and the floods descended. The downpour resembled a cloudburst, its fury being rarely equalled except in the tropical or semi-tropical regions. Maris Roydon lay sound asleep on his blanket spread on the earth, when he was roused by the shouts of the scouts and troopers. Under the impression that the camp had been attacked by the hostiles, he seized his rifle at his side and sprang to his feet.

The gloom was impenetrable. He was conscious of the moving forms around him, for twice he bumped against them. A terrifying and increasing roar filled the night, and he knew that a great danger impended. As was his rule, he always lay close to Bob Goodale. He stooped and gripped his shoulder.

"Get up, quick!" he shouted.

"What's the matter?" asked the bewildered Bob, who lost no time in obeying the command.

"I don't know, but we must get out of here—"

At that moment someone shouted:

"The valley is flooded! Run for your lives!"

Side by side, but invisible to each other, the youths plunged away, though neither knew the right direction to take. Within the same moment, they felt the water curling about their feet. They had headed down the valley, when Maris learned the nature of the peril.

"We must cut across the current," he called, "or we shall be swept away!"

They made an abrupt turn speeding for the sloping side of the ravine which could not have been more than fifty feet distant, but the torrent was like the tide that plays havoc in the Bay of Fundy, drowning cattle before they can elude its grasp. In the darkness, the youths ran with desperate energy. Maris stepped in a depression, but instantly recovered himself and dived for-

ward again. As he did so, the water swirled above his knees, then at his waist, and while still laboring onward, he was borne off his feet as if he were but a puff-ball.

"Keep on!" he shouted to his friend, whom he could not see; "we are close to the bank; I'm swimming!"

"So am I," came back the cry from the gloom below him.

In truth the two were being swept helplessly downward by the rushing torrent, against which it would have been idle for a Hercules to struggle. They were too sensible to make any resistance. All they did was to keep themselves afloat, striving vainly to brace against a fatal collision that was likely to occur at any moment.

This was the real peril. The course of the ravine or valley was winding, and while being whirled around the curves, lined with jagged rocks, they were liable to be flung against some of the obstructions with a violence like that of a giant catapult. The dread of such an ending caused both boys to "hold back" as much as they could, though little was effected in that direction.

"Where are you, Bob?" rang the inquiry of Maris, from the darkness.

"I wish you'd tell me," was the reply, from a point close to the inquirer; "I wonder where we shall 'light."

Rushing along in this fashion, Bob Goodale dropped his feet in the effort to touch solid ground, but could not do so. The depth might be six feet or double that and still rapidly increasing.

"Let's try to swim across," suggested Maris, at the top of his voice.

"Which way?"

"To the left as you face down stream."

This sounded feasible and the young men put forth their most determined effort. Suddenly Bob called:

"Gee! Maris, I forgot my gun."

"I didn't, but I had to drop mine to keep from drowning; we aren't in need of guns just now."

Something grazed Maris' face. Shrinking back he made a clutch at it, but his hand scraped past a rocky projection, without the slightest checking of his speed. His belief was that the comparatively narrow torrent had been crossed, and if the two could get

a grip on something they might free themselves from their imminent danger.

In such situations a person thinks fast. Maris knew from his own experience, and what he had learned from Corporal Bidwell and others, that these resistless outbursts subside as quickly as they arise. The fury of the waters, which found so favorable a vent in the valley, would soon spend itself. In less than an hour after the inrush, the valley would be comparatively empty of water again.

But it was that hour which held the frightful peril. The time was sufficient in which to hurry the helpless youths to their deaths.

Directly after the scraping against the rock, Maris Roydon asked himself:

"Wouldn't it be safer for us to keep in the middle of the stream, until it spreads out and shallows? This valley can't be very extensive and the torrent must soon lose its force—"

Before he could answer the question or ask Bob's views, his feet struck the ground. So swift was the rush that he would have been flung headlong off his feet, had not the

depth abruptly lessened in the same moment. The water did not rise above his knees. By a furious struggle he held himself unsteadily, fought his way two steps farther and then stepped upon firm earth.

"Bob, where are you?" he called to his chum.

"Half way to the Gulf," was the reply; "think I'll reach there by morning; you intend to keep with me?"

"I managed to get ashore; try to do the same."

Bob toiled so hard that he was silent for some minutes, during which, of course, he continued his swift flight. When he shouted again his voice sounded so far off that Maris was alarmed. He set out to keep pace with him along the narrow valley, but in the gloom and his unfamiliarity, it was difficult. He stumbled, bumped against boulders which had to be flanked, and was baffled by other vexatious turns. So far as progress went, he might as well have stood still.

In despair, he stopped and called again to Bob. There was no reply, nor was any re-

Captain Lawton had made no idle boast. Maris dropped on his feet, was carried several paces by his momentum, and then checked himself and looked around in time to see precisely the same thing done with Bob Goodale.

"Now, give me room!" called the Captain, recoiling several paces, just enough to secure the necessary distance. He ran the brief interval with great swiftness and leaped. The boys saw that immense form poised seemingly for an instant in mid air, with the legs drawn up beneath the body which described its graceful parabola, circle over and drop beside them. He had picked up his carbine and showed no effect of his tremendous exertion.*

"Now, we must do some traveling," he added; "there come the devils!"

The cracking of rifles broke the stillness. Captain Lawton lingered long enough to return several of the shots, and then led in the flight, which speedily placed all three beyond danger.

* This exploit may sound incredible, but, estimating the width of the chasm at 18 feet, A. C. Kraenzlein, in 1899, exceeded Captain Lawton's leap by

6 feet 4½ inches; Mr. Prinstein, in 1900, surpassed it by 6 feet 7¼ inches, while Peter O'Connor, in 1904, lacked but a quarter of an inch of clearing 25 feet after a running-jump. More than one officer to-day can tell of being picked up by Captain Lawton in sport and tossed a full rod with no great effort on his part. In strength and activity this wonderful man was without a peer in the army.

CHAPTER XIX.

SPREADING THE NET.

THE wife of Jose Maria, the interpreter, lived in the Mexican town of Fronteras, in northern Sonora. One night when she was sitting in her home, she heard someone calling the name of her husband She raised the window and looked out. In the obscurity, she saw the dim forms of two women standing on a near-by hill.

"What do you want with Jose?" she asked.

"We have a message for him; where is he?"

"He is with Captain Lawton, acting as his interpreter."

"Geronimo and his people wish to surrender."

"Send such word to Captain Lawton."

"But he is a good way off."

The reply of the wife was pointed.

"You have run from the troops so long, you will find no trouble in running toward them."

Meditating over this reply, the dusky females departed.

At this time, Captain Lawton was a hundred miles to the south of Fronteras. He met a party of Mexicans who told him the hostiles were near that town. On the same day news of their location reached several other military commands in Arizona. One of these under Lieutenant Wilder, of the Fourth Cavalry, met the two Apache women, who had taken the message to the wife of Jose Maria. The Lieutenant sent an order by them demanding the immediate surrender of the raiders.

Meanwhile, Captain Lawton pressed his advantage. A deserter came into his camp with word that the renegades had little ammunition left and were discouraged. Still the wily Geronimo was trying to make an agreement with the Mexicans which would leave him free to raid the Americans.

Some ten days previous, Lieutenant Charles B Gatewood, of the Sixth Calvary, had joined Captain Lawton's command on

the Yaqui River. He had a number of peculiar qualifications for the duty that now fell to him. He was a veteran Indian campaigner, one of the bravest officers in the service, spoke the Apache tongue and was an old acquaintance of Geronimo. He volunteered to go into the enemy's camp, talk with the Apache leader and learn his intentions.

Even the intrepid Lawton shook his head.

"It will be sure death; you know what devils they are, and they are now in the worst conceivable mood. They are tired out, disgusted and desperate; they have pretended more than once to be ready to surrender, but can be trusted no more than so many rattlesnakes."

"There is some risk," replied Gatewood, "but I'm willing to take it."

"Good luck to you, Lieutenant," said the Captain, as he wrung the hand of the officer.

The Apaches were encamped in an abandoned Jesuit mission village of old adobe houses. Lieutenant Gatewood was accompanied by two Chiricahua scouts, who kept with him until near the place, when the three halted. The officer dismounted, left his

horse in charge of his attendants and walked on alone. A minute later, the surprised hostiles observed the Lieutenant approaching and caught up their guns. Gatewood paused and laid down his carbine. Among the scowling group he recognized Geronimo.

Knowing he would be shot if he advanced farther, Gatewood beckoned Geronimo to come to him. The glum chief came forward. His face was like a thundercloud, and Gatewood saw he was in a murderous mood. But with a smile, the officer greeted the leader as he approached, and motioned him to sit down on a pile of stones. He complied, and Gatewood sat beside him. Only a short distance off, the band of hostiles grouped themselves and kept their eyes on the couple. No doubt they believed the interview would be short, and would end in the shooting of the white officer who had dared to place himself in their power. They were eager to fire the volley that would kill him.

Nothing but consummate tact saved Lieutenant Gatewood. Fixing his piercing black eyes on the officer, Geronimo demanded:

"Do you know the risk you run, and do you expect to leave this place alive?"

"I know, of course, you can kill me, but you are a great chief, and we have been friends for years; I was warned of the danger I ran in entering your camp, but I did not hesitate for I trust you."

The expression of the terrible countenance did not change, but the manner as well as the words of the visitor produced a good effect.

"Well, I am listening; what have you to say?"

"I want to speak to your good sense; you do not need to be told wisdom by me, for you know the situation as well as I do. The Mexican troops are pressing toward this point and our own troops are not far off. You will soon be surrounded so there will be no escape; will it not be wise to surrender to us and trust to our honor?"

"If we surrender will our lives be spared?"

"The white men never kill their prisoners. Let me impress upon you, Geronimo, that you are sure of getting far better terms if you surrender now than if you continue your raiding and hold off longer. You know the Mexicans have joined with us in

hunting you down; we are now, and have been for a long time in their country, because they have welcomed us, and we have joined hands in pursuing you; we shall both keep at it, so long as there is a single Apache off the Reservation."

"If you mean to kill us all we may as well die fighting."

It was this suspicion of the Apache leader that was the real trouble. He would not yield until it was removed. He could not forget that he and his bucks had treacherously broken their pledges and committed the most horrible of crimes. If they received their dues their lives would be forfeited the instant the troops could lay hands on them.

Lieutenant Gatewood now set to work to soothe the distrust of the dusky leader, though the officer could offer no terms beyond the general assurance that if the band surrendered they would be treated as prisoners of war. I have sometimes wondered whether Geronimo had ever heard of the Sioux outbreak in Minnesota twenty-four years before, when some thirty red murderers were tried, convicted and properly

hanged for the appalling crimes they had committed upon the settlers.

Be that as it may, Lieutenant Gatewood, by his exquisite tact, by flattery and argument succeeded finally in partially gaining the confidence of the chief.

"If I visit General Lawton's camp tomorrow, will any harm be done me?"

"I pledge my honor there will not."

"I will make the visit."

Gatewood bade Geronimo good-day, walked back to where his scouts were awaiting him and galloped off to report to Captain Lawton. That officer was in advance of his main command and with his scouts not distant. He saw from the expression of the Lieutenant's face that he was in a dismal mood.

"I am discouraged," said Gatewood; "I don't believe Geronimo has the slightest intention of surrendering; he is at his old tricks again; he will talk and talk and get what promises he can, and then when we think it is all over but the shouting, he and Natchez and their head scoundrels will be off like the whirlwind for the Sierra Madres again."

"I am more hopeful than you, Lieutenant; Geronimo means to give up, for he has learned that it is all that is left him to do. If he intended to break away again, he would have done it before we got so near him. We shall keep sharp watch of his camp and be ready to follow if he does make a start."

The surprising thing took place early the next morning. Geronimo, Natchez and a dozen of his leading bucks strode into camp, as if they had come to make a social call upon friends. Catching sight of the tall figure of Captain Lawton, Geronimo made a rush for him, threw both arms around his waist, gave a hug and said:

"You are my friend! You are the man I want to talk with!"

It is not to be supposed that the grim veteran was specially pleased with this mark of distinguished consideration, but he could afford to hide his disgust as he made a pretence of pleasure.

A business talk followed. Geronimo said he and his men were willing to surrender, but they wished terms and privileges similar

to what they had enjoyed before. Some people look upon that perfidious chief as a brave man, but his one dominant terror was of being deservedly punished for his crimes. He begged to know over and over again whether his life would be spared in the event of his yielding. He was urgent to see General Miles, the Department Commander, and sent two messages to him to that effect. The General replied that his requests could not be granted, but he was assured that Captain Lawton was authorized to receive their surrender as prisoners of war to troops in the field. They were told again that if they would submit, they would be treated fairly, but held subject to higher authority.

The entire body of Apaches now came down within two miles of Lawton's camp, and still later took up quarters only half a mile away. They then agreed to accompany Captain Lawton to a point where they could surrender personally to General Miles.

Such was the situation and a day's march was made, when a new complication arose which threatened to overturn everything. It looked again as if when on the verge of success, all that had been done was to be

scattered to the winds. It was early in the morning when a force of 180 Mexicans suddenly appeared under the command of the Prefect of Arispe. Lieutenant Smith and Tom Horn, chief of scouts, sprang upon their mules and rode down into a dense canebrake to learn what it meant.

The Mexicans were in an ugly mood. They had been trailing the Apaches a long time and now that they had the chance meant to wipe them off the face of the earth.

"We intend to attack their camp at once," was their declaration.

"You must not do that," replied Lieutenant Smith; "they are our prisoners; we are on our way to the United States and will not permit them to be molested."

"We cannot credit what you tell us; I do not doubt your belief, but no dependence can be placed upon any pledges of theirs."

"The hostiles are under our protection and will be defended," warned the officer.

Soon after Captain Lawton rode up and was told the state of affairs.

"I do not deny that you are justified in your distrust," he said to the Prefect, "but to convince you of your error, I will permit

ten of your men to ride into our camp and see for themselves that the hostiles really mean to surrender."

The Prefect demurred. He was unwilling to throw away an advantage which might never present itself again.

While the interview was under way, Geronimo showed his quick preception of facts by reading the purpose of the Mexicans. He sent word to Captain Lawton:

"I shall hold my Indians ready to attack the Mexicans in the rear while you attack them in front."

Lawton's reply to this offer was an order to the Apaches to pull out and keep out of the way. This order was carried to them by Captain Leonard Wood. The two officers, Walsh and Gatewood, were sent among the Apaches to protect them from collision with the American troops. Captain Wood further assured them that Captain Lawton would stand by them and not permit any attack by the Mexicans.

As another illustration of the vigilance of the hostiles, some of their scouts came into camp soon after with word that ten Mexicans were with the Americans. The Indians

were disturbed as to what it meant. Captain Wood told them the truth, and Lawton went into camp near them. This satisfied Geronimo, who was requested by Lawton to come to him with his Indians, in order to convince the Mexicans that they meant to surrender.

This was a crucial test. If Geronimo complied it may be said he would "cross the line," leaving no withdrawal possible by him. If he held back, the Mexicans would be warranted in making the attack, whose results would be frightful. The leader did not hesitate. Hardly a member of his band was absent when they strode toward the tree under which the ten Mexicans were standing.

The situation could not have been more critical. When nearly opposite the Mexicans one of the latter was so nervous that he moved the revolver in his belt. In a flash every Indian's weapon was drawn. Not a Mexican would have escaped had not Captain Wood and the officers leaped between the two parties and thrown up their hands as an order for the Indians not to fire.

It was a startling incident when the lives

of the men hung on the passing of a breath, but the Mexicans expressed themselves satisfied. They went off to rejoin their command and nothing more was seen of them.

The next day Lieutenant Smith set out with the cavalry and pack-train, while the Indians were accompanied by Wood, Lawton, Gatewood and Clay. This was a necessary precaution, for different commands were converging upon the hostiles, and would assail them on the first chance unless officers were at hand to make explanation.

When noon came and passed, Smith and his cavalry were nowhere in sight. It was evident that through a misunderstanding he had taken a wrong direction. Serious consequences were liable to follow the blunder, and Lawton started to find the other command, having first agreed upon a place where Geronimo and his band would encamp for the night.

This action left Wood, Gatewood and Clay alone with the Apaches. It would be idle to pretend that they did not feel misgiving. There was no treachery of which those red men were not capable, and there must have been some temptation to work

their will upon the officers who could have made no escape or defence.

It would not be the first time that the fierce leaders after giving their pledge to submit had broken away and renewed their terrific raids over an area of hundreds of square miles. Captain (now General) Wood naively tells of a trying test to which he was subject. He carried a Hotchkiss rifle, which caught the interest of Geronimo. He did not understand its mechanism and asked to be allowed to examine it. Captain Wood passed it to him, accompanied by some ammunition with which to test the weapon. Finally when the gun was ready, the Captain pointed at a mark some distance away, and invited his host to try his skill.

Geronimo leveled the rifle and pulled the trigger. He not only missed the target but came within a hair of shooting one of his own men. The sight of the terrified buck as he leaped in air and stared around to learn the cause struck the chief as so funny that he roared with laughter.

"Good gun," he declared, as he handed it back to the owner.

Some time later, Geronimo assured his

white guests that they were held in high respect by him and his comrades.

"You have never lied to us and we shall not lie to you; this camp is yours as long as you choose to stay in it."

These were pleasant words and did much to remove the fears of the officers, though none could feel absolutely safe so long as they were virtual prisoners of the Apaches.

The band while making its way toward the spot agreed upon for camp gave several proofs of their marvelous woodcraft. They were looking for the command that had gone astray and early the next afternoon, Geronimo quietly told the officers who were riding beside him that the two parties were drawing near each other. The guests wondered how the leader could know this, for no matter in what direction the field glasses were turned they failed to show footman or horseman.

"They are coming; we shall soon meet," quietly replied Geronimo.

He was right, for late that afternoon the missing command loomed in sight, and all camped together. The next day the march was resumed toward the boundary line.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ROUND-UP.

CAPTAIN LAWTON was so urgent for General Miles to meet Geronimo, who insisted upon surrendering to the highest authority, that the Commander consented on condition that the Apache leader gave proof of his faith. He suggested that the chief should provide a hostage for that purpose. Geronimo immediately sent his brother to Fort Bowie to remain there as such hostage.

Having learned that the brother had started for the post named, General Miles moved south on the 2d of September, with Lieutenant Dapray, A. D. C., and a proper escort. Despite the prompt compliance of the Apache leader with the request of General Miles, that officer did not feel much encouragement. He was uneasy over the news

that had come to him of the risk a number of officers had taken by entering the hostile camp. As he expressed it, he would not have been willing to sacrifice one of those officers for the whole Apache band.

General Miles took with him his saddle horses and wagons, using both means of progress on his long journey. He was accompanied by a heliostat operator. Whenever they came in sight of a mountain peak, containing one of the heliograph stations, the General opened communication with it, with Fort Bowie and with Captain Lawton. Thus the two officers kept informed of each other's movements. Lawton was specially warned against allowing any of his officers to place themselves where the Indians could seize them for ransom, or for securing such terms as they might wish.

Skeleton Cañon was reached on the evening of September 3. Soon after, Geronimo rode into camp and dismounted. It was the first time he and General Miles had met. I have already quoted the impression which the distinguished soldier formed of him. As before, the dusky leader was anxious to know whether the lives of himself and hos-

tiles would be spared if they surrendered. Naturally he tried to make the best terms he could. He proposed to submit as he had been in the habit of doing. This would let him go back to Fort Apache, taking his property, arms, stolen stock and everything with him. To permit anything of that nature would be saying to the terrible desperado: "When you get tired of being good Indians on the Reservation, start off again, stealing, murdering and burning right and left, not only in the United States but in Mexico. When you are pursued and cornered, come back to the Reservation and do it all over again."

General Miles left no room for mistake on the part of the Apache leader.

"You must do exactly as Captain Lawton told you—this is, surrender as prisoners of war, and without any conditions. You must do as I tell you to do; you can't go back to Fort Apache; even if you could, it would do you no good, for there are no Indians there now."

Geronimo was astonished.

"Are there no Apaches in the White Mountains?"

"No."

"Where have they gone?"

"I have had them all moved out of the country. You have been warring upon the white people for many years and I have decided to make that impossible any longer by taking all of you out of the country."

Geronimo showed he was depressed by this unexpected news. He was silent for a minute, and then said, meekly:

"We will do whatever you wish and ask only one condition."

"What is that?"

"That you will spare our lives."

It was the old, ever present fear of this wretch who had shown no mercy to man, helpless woman or the babe at its mother's breast.

"With form like patient Job's eschewing evil,
With motions graceful as a bird in air,
Thou wert in truth the veriest devil
That e'er clinched fingers in a captive's hair.

"That in thy veins there flows a fountain,
Deadlier than that which bathes the Upas tree,
And in thy wrath a nursing cat o' mountain,
Is calm as a babe's sleep compared to thee."

General Miles reminded Geronimo that the United states army never mistreated its prisoners. Their final fate rested with the President, who was a just man. But of one thing the chief might rest assured: he and his turbulent warriors would be removed from the country they had scourged so long, and placed where they could do no more harm. All that remained for Geronimo to do was to obey the orders that had been given him.

"I will do so," he replied, "and will bring in my camp to-morrow morning."

With this, he mounted his pony and galloped off. General Miles watched him ride away and felt how little control he had over him. But there come times when one must trust an Indian, no matter how unworthy he may be, and this was one of those times. At any rate, he had left this brother with the soldiers as a hostage, and it would seem that that ought to have weight with the chief.

On this occasion, Geronimo kept his promise, for he appeared the next morning at the head of his band. Natchez, the

hereditary chief of the Apaches, however, was not with them. This caused General Miles some concern, and he was not told why the leader had remained away. He seized the opportunity, however, to impress upon Geronimo the folly of trying to hold out against the American troops.

"We have steam by which we can move troops faster than you can ride on your swiftest horses, and we have the telegraph and heliostat which are far ahead of your means of communication."

Geronimo knew something of railways and the telegraph, but he asked the commander to explain what he meant by the heliostat.

At the request of General Miles, the operator erected a temporary tripod by joining three sticks together.

"With this instrument," said the commander, to Geronimo, "we can send messages over your heads, and from mountain peak to mountain peak, in a few hours, when it will take twenty days for a swift pony to go that far."

"Show me how you do it."

The operator was told to open communication with the nearest station which was fifteen miles distant in an air line. Geronimo saw the man flash a light to which an instant response was made from the far-away mountain top. He was awed, for an Indian is always impressed by anything he doesn't understand. The chief said he had often noticed those flashes from high points and made it a rule always to pass around such mountains, for he was afraid to go near them.

"From that point yonder," said the General, "I can send a message to Fort Bowie, sixty-five miles away, or to Fort Apache nearly three hundred miles, and get an answer before the sun sinks in the west."

"If you can talk with Fort Bowie," said the wondering Geronimo, "ask whether my brother is there, and whether all is well with him."

General Miles ordered communication to be opened with Fort Bowie, and the questions asked of the officer in command.

"You will have to wait for that inquiry

and answer, which has to be repeated six times."

Sooner even than the commanding officer expected, the reply came back that Geronimo's brother was there, was well and was waiting for the chieftain to join him.

Geronimo did not doubt what was told him, but how amazing it all was! It must be the spirits had something to do with it, for he had never seen anything of the kind before. Having grasped the mystery, so far as it was possible for him to do so, Geronimo turned and said something to one of his warriors, who, without replying, walked to where his pony was lariated, leaped upon his back and galloped toward the mountains from which Geronimo had come.

General Miles turned to the interpreter and asked him whether he had heard what the chief said. The interpreter nodded, with a smile:

"He told the buck to go and tell Natchez that a power was working here which he could not understand; Natchez must come in and *come quick.*"

It may be said that the heliostat had done

its last and best work, for it accomplished the one thing remaining undone. A few hours later, Natchez came riding down the mountains with his company of warriors and their families. He had obeyed the command of Geronimo, but it was evident he was uneasy.

As has been stated, Natchez is the son of the famous chief Cochise, and seemed always to be mindful of his dignity and honor. He was over six feet in height, graceful of movement and superior in every respect to his associates.

It was a strange, mongrel mob that came in and surrendered. Many of them were outlaws from their own tribe. The very worst element among them was the boys of from twelve to eighteen years of age. They reveled in cruelty, and merciless crime. They were the most guilty, but had they been turned over to the civil courts for punishment, most, if not all of them would have escaped, gone back to their Reservation to break forth again on the first opportunity, and renew the raids which terrorized the Southwest. A good many of

these vicious youths were afterward sent to the Carlisle school, where their character was completely changed.

It looked as if the blessed end had been reached, but the possibility of everything being brought to naught remained. Not wishing to make another camp, General Miles arranged for a start early the next morning. The interval was spent in explaining to the prisoners what would be required of them and what they must do.

A singular scene followed. The day had been intensely hot, and a furious thunder storm accompanied by vivid lightning and a drenching downpour drove everyone to shelter. Into a small, canvas-covered wagon were crowded General Miles, Captain Lawton, Lieutenant Dapray, Geronimo and Natchez, while others squeezed themselves under the wagon. Officers, soldiers and Indians huddled wherever they could obtain partial shelter from the fierce tempest.

The following morning General Miles started with an escort of a troop of cavalry and with Geronimo, Natchez and four other

Indians for Fort Bowie, which was reached the same evening. Captain Lawton followed with the remainder of the Indians and arrived three days later. General Miles records that as they were riding forward, Geronimo gazing off toward the Chiricahua Mountains, remarked:

"This is the fourth time I have surrendered."

"And it will be the last," was the comment of the commander. The glum chieftain made no reply, but he must have done a good deal of thinking. There was only a small garrison at Fort Bowie, which for months had been in a state of practical siege. No one dared go even a small distance from the post without an armed escort, and the families passed anxious weeks awaiting news from the troops in the field.

In order to avoid any conflict with the civil authorities, General Miles placed a strong guard around the Reservation. The Apache prisoners were dismounted, disarmed and put in charge of an escort. On the 8th of September, under the direction of Captain Lawton, all the prisoners entered

a waiting railway train and started eastward over the Southern Pacific Railroad.

When the procession was about to move from the fort, the band of the Fourth Cavalry stationed on the parade ground, struck up the sweet strains of "Auld Lang Syne." It would be hard to picture a more grotesque scene. The musicians were inspired by a mischievous spirit, and some of those who were blowing their instruments found it hard to do so because of their amusement. As for the prisoners they did not know what it all meant. They were grave and puzzled, and stared inquiringly into the grinning faces around them. Some of the bystanders catching the feeling, joined in singing that touching song of Bobby Burns.

> "Should old acquaintance be forgot
> And never brought to mind?
> Should old acquaintance be forgot,
> And the days of old lang syne?"

On the outer fringe of the crowd, stood two young men singing with might and main. One was Maris Roydon, whose sweet tenor voice rang out over the scorched plain,

while Bob Goodale, at his side joined heart and soul with his fine baritone. As the train finally moved off hats and handkerchiefs were waved, shouts uttered and the mystified prisoners looked as if it was all beyond their comprehension, as in truth it was.

"Never," said Maris, to his friend, "was there a time when all could join more fervently in the prayer, 'Speed the parting guest.'"

"For the first time in long years the Southwest can breathe freely," replied Bob, "what a heavenly relief it is!"

Nothing can show more strikingly the intense rage of the people against these wretches than the proposal at different points along the railway, to destroy some of the bridges and throw the train down a precipice, in the hope of killing every dusky demon on board. Only the fact that such a desperate act would cause the death of innocent persons prevented its being carried out.

And here I must quote the words of Captain Charles Nordstrom:

"Geronimo had surrendered! The South-

west was wild with joy. Men shook hands, congratulating each other on the happy issue of the campaign; women kissed and wept in each other's arms, for their little ones were no longer in danger of having their throats cut or their brains battered out against the side of the cabin, while they looked on in anguish, knowing the worse fate in store for them. A feeling of unutterable relief and thankfulness was experienced by all, tempered, however, by the unnatural anxiety concerning the disposition to be made of the 'prisoners of war.' Geronimo had surrendered before, only to 'break out' again with renewed acts of fiendishness. 'Will he be allowed to do the same thing over again when he gets rested?' was the question asked on all sides.

"No man in this country has read the lessons of experience to greater advantage than General Miles, as his action at this stage amply demonstrated. His acquaintance with the previous history of the Indian question in Arizona, with a thorough knowledge of the Indian character, convinced him that again to turn Geronimo and his band loose as 'prisoners of war' to prey upon

the people at their leisure, as had been done before, would be one of the most gigantic crimes of the nineteenth century, for the commission of which he did not propose to be held responsible. Promises of future good behavior did not avail; these had been made before only to be broken. It was proposed to take no further chance, but to put it forever out of the power of these wild beasts to do further harm. And, thus it happened that almost before the 'Indian Ring' on the one hand and the Indian Commission on the other knew that Geronimo was in our hands, he and his followers were shipped off to St. Augustine, the Indian Botany Bay, where in meditation upon his past misdeeds he had become a 'quiet, docile old man.'

"Arizona and New Mexico took a long breath. The snake had not only been scotched, but virtually killed. Every town, from Albuquerque to Tucson gave itself up to the joy of the hour. Fêtes were organized, balls and parties were given, and everyone without regard to past affiliations did all in his power to honor him who had courageously delivered the people from the deadly

menace of a merciless foe. The name of Miles was on every lip, his praises sung by all.

"Geronimo's deportation marks the commencement of a period of prosperity unequalled in the history of the two Territories since they were added to the national domain as one of the results of the Mexican war. The people who but yesterday were fleeing their borders prepared to remain, and a tide of immigration set in that has continued ever since. The wife and mother no longer kissed the husband good-bye, as he went forth to his daily vocations, with the sickening fear that he might be brought back to her cold in death, the victim of some sneaking Apache's bullet; the husband and father departed to his mine or ranch, cheered by the certainty that on his return he would not find his cabin in ashes, his children murdered and mutilated, his wife gone, but where he left it in the morning—his loved ones running to meet him, the glad smile of conscious security mantling their happy faces. Is it to be wondered that these people love Nelson A. Miles?"

In the month of November, 1887, the citi-

zens of Arizona presented General Miles with a beautifully ornamented sword as an evidence of their gratitude to him for ridding their country of the Apaches. The ceremonies were impressive, opening with a street parade and closing with a grand reception and ball at the San Xavier Hotel, Tucson, in the evening. No one can question that the tribute was well earned by this brilliant and tactful officer, whose services to his country previous to and since then place him in the front rank of the most distinguished leaders of our armies.

At this writing (1908), Geronimo is still living, an old and broken down man. What may be called his last public appearance was at the inauguration of President Roosevelt, on March 4, 1905. The feeble reprobate, with the tears flowing down his wrinkled cheeks, begged the President to allow him to return to his old home to die. The President told him (see "Off the Reservation") that if he were allowed to go back to Arizona he would probably die at once, at the hands of some of those who remembered his misdeeds. He told the chief to continue to be good and perhaps his

prayer would be granted, but it depended wholly on himself.

* * * *

Justice to the living and dead requires a few words regarding the conquest of the Apaches. There has been much misrepresentation and erroneous impressions still exist. After the surrender of Geronimo's band, all the hostiles were brought in by Lieutenant Marion P. Maus, with the exception of thirteen women and twenty-two men. The whole number, seventy-nine were turned over at Fort Bowie and afterward sent to Florida. While pursuing the twenty-two men and thirteen women, Lieutenant Maus captured two. Among those who surrendered to his command were Chiefs Chihuahua, Cuthley, Josane, Nana, Geronimo's brother and the wives of Natchez, Geronimo and his brother. Less than twenty surrendered to General Miles, but its great importance lay in the fact that both Geronimo and Natchez were with them.

Neither of these chiefs was the equal as a warrior of Chihuahua, Josone or Cuthley, but the former were the most famous.

It is to be remembered further that after

the surrender to Lieutenant Maus, no fighting was done by the command of Captain Lawton. Nothing could surpass the vigorous and persistent pursuit of the hostiles from place to place, during which the scouts and troops underwent hardships and sufferings beyond the power of pen to describe.

Moreover, the Apaches who did not return with Lieutenant Maus were never his prisoners. They were as much at liberty as when hundreds of miles away in the Sierra Madres. It is the height of unfairness, therefore, to speak of the few hostiles as breaking away and escaping. Despite the fighting, the dangers met and overcome, the frightful sufferings undergone and the important results obtained by Maus, nearly all the credit and glory is generally given to Lawton. Lawton deservedly rose to the rank of major-general, and as has been stated was killed in the Philippines; Lieutenant Shipp fell at San Juan, Cuba; Captain Leonard Wood, who had never had an important command during the Apache campaign, was a surgeon fortunate enough to become Colonel of the Rough Riders, with Theodore Roosevelt his second in rank. As

a consequence, Wood is now the senior major-general of the army.

Lieutenant Maus was graduated from the West Point Military Academy in 1874, and rose to the rank of captain in November, 1890; major in 1899; lieutenant-colonel, 1902 and colonel in 1904. During the Spanish-American war, he was appointed lieutenant-colonel in the Inspector-General's Department, May 24, 1898, and served as such until June 30, 1901. He was awarded the medal of Honor "for most distinguished gallantry in action against hostile Apaches Indians led by Geronimo and Natchez, in the Sierra Madres Mountains, Mexico, Jaunary 11, 1886, while first-lieutenant, First Infantry and commanding the expedition."

The following are worth putting on record:

GENERAL ORDERS, No. 39.

HEADQUARTEDS OF THE ARMY,
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, April 9, 1891.

January 10, 1886. Captain Marion P. Maus (then 1st lieutenant), 1st Infantry, commanding Indian scouts; for gallantry in action against

Geronimo's band of hostile Apache Indians, near the Aros River, Mexico, and in the encounter with Chihuahua troops on the following day (11th), and for the marked skill and ability with which, after the death of its commanding officer, he conducted the expedition back to the United States under most difficult and trying circumstances.

By Command of Major General Schofield:

J. C. KELTON,
Adjutant General.

Orders, No. 41. Adjutant General's Office, *Washington, April* 20, 1891.

May, 1885, and eleven months following. Major General *Crook,* in his report of his operations during this period against hostile Apaches in Arizona and Sonora, mentions, also, * * * 1st Lieutenant *Marion P. Maus* (now Captain), 1st Infantry; * * who commanded expeditions or companies of Indian scouts in Mexico, for bearing uncomplainingly the almost incredible fatigues and privations, as well as the dangers, incident to their operations.

By Command of Major General Schofield:

J. C. KELTON,
Adjutant General.

Thus it will be noted that one of our most capable and brilliant officers, after a long and arduous service reached the reward he would have reached had he spent all the

years on home duty. Among those whose noble work was never suitably recognized were: Tom Horn, chief of scouts, Captain Crawford, Wirt Davis, Baldwin, Snyder and Lieutenants Gatewood and Clarke. Some of these are dead, and some secured advancement in the regular course of promotion, but their honors can bear no comparison with those who possessed that all-powerful lever known as a "pull."

In view of what has just been stated, the following despatch has peculiar significance. It was sent from the City of Mexico, March 20, 1908:

"A band of renegade Apache Indians has been committing raids upon Mexican settlements and mining camps in the State of Sonora, according to advices received by the War Department. It is stated that the Indians killed two Mexicans near Apute and sacked mining camps in that vicinity of all goods that could be carried off on pack animals.

"The Prefecto of Montezuma sent out runners to all parts of his district and an organized campaign has been started to exterminate the Indians. It is positively stated by some of the residents of Sonora that the notorious Apache Kid, who was

supposed to have been killed about six years ago, is at the head of this renegade band.

"These Indians formerly belonged to Geronimo's band, and when that chief was rounded up in Arizona about twenty years ago they made their escape into Mexico, where they have lived ever since."

CHAPTER XXI.

GOOD-BYE.

AND now let us return to Maris Roydon and Bob Goodale, of whom we have lost sight for some time past.

The youths remained with the command of Captain Lawton until its arrival at Fort Bowie three days behind General Miles and his escort. The trials and hardships of the campaign had told upon them as they did upon every one who bore any part in that memorable running down of Geronimo and Natchez. They were a dozen pounds lighter in weight than when they rode southward in high spirits several months before, but the health of each was perfect. Their faces were tanned to that degree that they might well have passed for Mexicans or Spaniards. As for the troublesome cough which was the real cause of their venture into that

arid region, it had so completely left Maris that I did not think it worth while to make any reference to it.

It must be admitted that both of our young friends were tired of the Southwest, and glad beyond expression to turn their faces homeward. They confessed to each other that they had often condemned themselves for what they did, but now that it was all over, it can hardly be said they regretted their experience. The memory would always remain, and the rough campaign with its out door life and exposure, had given a ruggedness to their health whose beneficent effect would be felt for many a year to come.

As the youths drew near Fort Bowie, they grew nervous over the expected news from home. A great deal might have happened while they were roving through Sonora or in the flaming Southwest of their own country, and their friends must be greatly concerned for them.

The tidings vastly relieved and delighted them. The last letter from the east was in both cases written hardly ten days previous.

At that time, the sister and father of Bob were enjoying fine health; no incident worth noting had occurred, but they were anxious for the return of the brother and son, and wondering how much longer they would have to wait for him.

Maris Roydon hunted out the letter from his mother which bore the latest postmark and eagerly read the dear handwriting. In substance the missive was similar to that of Bob Goodale. Having satisfied himself on that score, Maris next opened a large envelope from the Secretary of War, Washington. He knew its meaning before he glanced at the formal notification of his appointment as a cadet to the Military Academy at West Point, upon the recommendation of his Congressional relative. He was ordered to report on June following. He passed the letter over to Bob for inspection, while he read the remaining missives. These included several from his brothers. Maris read enough to tell him all was well with the two who had returned from Europe, when he sent a telegram to his mother. He said he and Bob Goodale

had just arrived at the fort from Sonora, and would start eastward on the morrow. Both were in fine health and happy at the thought that if all went well they would soon be with their loved ones.

"Will thank you," added Maris, in conclusion, "if you will telegraph twenty-five hundred dollars to me at Denver."

"God bless her," he said, after Bob had also sent a despatch home, "it will be just like her to send more than I ask."

"Won't there be trouble in telegraphing so large a sum?"

"It is unusual, but she will manage it."

The boys felt a touch of sadness when they came to bid good-bye to their friends. There is no comradeship like that produced by the sharing of common danger, and they had formed strong friendships for more than one of their associates. Captain Lawton shook the hand of each warmly, and wished them well.

"I understand you have received an appointment to West Point," he said to Maris.

"Yes; I have been that fortunate; I hope I shall make good."

"No fear of that; you will be an ideal officer; you are made of the right stuff."

"That is very kind of you, Captain; I only hope that if I succeed in graduating, it shall be my good fortune to serve under you."

"In that event the good fortune will be mine," said the grim hero, as his hard face relaxed into a smile; "the army needs such as you; I should be glad if Mr. Goodale was to be a cadet with you."

"I have no taste in that direction," replied Bob, who was greatly pleased by the words of the officer to his friend.

"Then you shouldn't have anything to do with it; no man can succeed in doing well at that which he doesn't like."

There is no saying what emotions stirred the heart of Arak the scout, when, with the aid of the interpreter, Bob had his final talk with him. Perhaps no Apache could give a stronger expression of his regard than he did when he refused to accept the ten dollars which Bob offered him. He must have known what a prodigious quantity of mescal it would buy—enough to make him

howl and dance for several days, but he shook his head.

"He says you have been too good to him," explained the interpreter; "he cannot take it."

"I'll fix it," said Maris; "let me have the money."

Bob passed the bills to him, and Maris added double the amount to the wad which he squeezed into the smallest possible space. He gravely handed them to the interpreter and said:

"Tell Arak that if he doesn't take the money, we'll shoot him!"

Maris and Bob tried to look fiercely in earnest, but the manner of the scout made it impossible. He glanced from the face of one to the other, assumed a scared expression, grabbed the money, whirled about and loped off as if he had just struck the trail of an enemy.

"He will be dead to the world for two or three weeks to come," remarked Bob, while he and his companion shook with laughter.

Corporal Billy Bidwell accompanied the youths to the station and shook the hand of

each as he was about to step aboard. They had given him their addresses and promised to write to him, while the Corporal on his part pledged himself to reply. I may as well add that the agreement was kept by everyone who had a part in making it.

The Corporal had with great care and pains cut a wooden image from a block of pine. It was meant for a doll which Maris promised to hand to Molly Bidwell, in Denver, as a present from her father, who was rejoicing over the big plump letter which had been awaiting him for a couple of weeks at Fort Bowie.

"Be assured that we shall seek her out and lose no time in handing it to her. You can picture her delight."

"Yes," replied the Corporal, with a tremulous voice; "but somehow or other I think she would be happier for a sight of *me.*"

"Now that the hard campaign is over, I have no doubt you will be able to get a furlough and spend several weeks with her"

"I shall try, for you don't know how homesick I am to see her."

Finally the good-byes were said and Maris and Bob left their genial friend at the sta-

tion longing unspeakably to bear them company.

On the third day following, our two young friends left the train at the Union Station in Denver. They first went to the telegraph office, where as expected a despatch was awaiting Maris from his mother. He smiled when he read it.

"I have telegraphed you three thousand; better have too much than not enough."

When it came to paying over so large an amount, the agent insisted very properly upon identification, though he had delivered the telegram without question. Maris said he would see what he could do and went to the hotel. Proprietor Tom Burr was a large, genial man with a bald head, who always wore his hat in the house and well back from his crown. His personality had made him one of the most popular landlords in the Middle West. He let his clerk attend to the accounts while he made things pleasant for his patrons.

Adjusting his eyeglasses he swung the register around, carefully studied the signatures and extended his hand:

"Mighty glad to see you, Roydon," he

said, "and you too, Goodale. How long shall we have the pleasure of your company?"

"Probably not after to-morrow; we have stopped to attend to a little business."

"I notice you are from the East."

"Yes; we live in Pennsylvania; we have been spending some time in Arizona."

"Helping to run down Geronimo I 'spose?" was the inquiring remark of the landlord, with an owlish wink of one eye.

"That's what we have been doing," replied Bob; "we can't say we helped much, but we went through the whole campaign."

"Jewhilikins! Don't tell me; did you run across a soldier out there named Bidwell—Billy Bidwell? I think he's got to be a Corporal or Colonel or something like that."

"We have spent months with him; he is soon to be made a sergeant, though he doesn't know it; he's one of the best fellows that ever lived."

"Now you're shouting! I've knowed Billy ever since he was a foot high; if I had

my way I'd put him at the head of the army."

"Mr. Goodale and I are in Denver on purpose to call on Corporal Billy's mother and his little girl Molly."

"Wal, now that's awful nice in you; they'll be tickled half to death to see you; it's quite a little walk out to their home; do you know the way?"

"He gave us directions."

Maris repeated them and the landlord nodded his head.

"Mr. Burr," said Maris, believing it time to strike; "I have had some funds telegraphed to me from home; the telegram has been received at the office, but I can't collect the money without being identified. Are you satisfied that my name is Maris Roydon?"

"Satisfied! Rather; what if I never seen you till a few minutes ago, I can tell you are what you claim to be."

"If you will identify me at the telegraph office they will give me a draft on a Denver bank; then if it will not be asking too much, you may identify me at the bank and I can draw the money."

"Mighty glad to do it; how much—a hundred dollars?"

"Three thousand!"

Landlord Burr's eyes expanded. He wrinkled his thick lips and whistled, but he was game. Maris thought best to explain.

"I wish to make arrangements to pay off a mortgage on the home of Corporal Billy Bidwell."

"His mortgage is only two thousand; I know, for I own it."

"That's lucky, for then I can pay you; as soon as I can draw the funds or deposit them in the bank subject to your order, we will go to the county clerk's office and have the mortgage cancelled."

"Wal, wal," murmured the landlord; "I never expected to get *that* mortgage, and I'm sure I'd never asked Billy for it; I'll go with you now and we can have the whole thing fixed before dinner."

This suited Maris. The only trouble threatened was from Landlord Burr's overwhelming readiness to do everything desired. Arrived at the telegraph office, which was with the express, he hailed the clerk as "Gus," and introduced his friend

Maris Roydon, whom he had known intimately for seven years, he being a son of his particular friend in Harrisburg, though the landlord had never set foot in the State of Pennsylvania.

The identification was sufficient and a draft for three thousand dollars was handed over to Maris who gave his receipt therefor. When the bank upon which the draft was drawn was reached, Mr. Burr introduced Maris as an acquaintance of eleven years standing, his father and the landlord's having been classmates in Harvard. If there had been another identification necessary, probably the good fellow would have claimed an acquaintanceship dating before Maris' birth.

But no man in Denver had a better rating for a moderate amount in Dun and Bradstreet than Thomas Burr. Maris left two thousand dollars subject to draft and drew a thousand in currency. From the bank, they went to the county clerk's office, where the mortgage of two thousand dollars, plus a moderate amount of interest was paid in full, the mortgage cancelled and passed over to Maris, after he had given a check for

the amount, making up the difference with the currency which he had already drawn.

As they sauntered homeward, all three as happy as they could be, Landlord Burr shoved his hat so far back on his head that viewed from the rear it looked as if it were hanging on a nail. Evidently something was on his mind. He was a great chewer of tobacco, and, after irrigating the pavement most of the way and clearing his throat, he said:

"I'd like to ask you a question, Roydon, if you won't think it a piece of imperdence."

"Go ahead," replied Maris, nudging Bob. Both knew what was coming.

"From the way this bus'ness has been managed, it looks to me as if you had made a present to Corporal Billy Bidwell of that money."

"Well, what of it?" asked Maris in reply.

"Nothing—Oh, nothing—only it looks blamed queer."

At this point, Bob Goodale decided to do the talking for his friend.

"Mr. Burr, we both formed a strong liking for Corporal Bidwell; he risked his life

more than once for us; Mr. Roydon belongs to a wealthy family; he managed to draw out from the Corporal the fact that he owed this mortgage on his house; my friend decided to give himself the pleasure of paying it; he can well afford to do so; the Corporal has no suspicion of anything of the kind and won't know it for a long time; that's all there is to it."

Feeling himself unable to express his emotions in words, Landlord Burr softly hummed "The Arkansaw Traveler," as the three sauntered back to the hotel. He had gone through many strange experiences in his time, but in some respects the present outdid them all.

"The idee of a young chap making a present of two thousand dollars to a feller just 'cause he saved his life—wal, that gits me!"

After the mid-day meal, Maris and Bob entered upon the sweetest pleasure of all. It was a mild September afternoon, that they strolled across the bridge over the Platte, leading toward Highland Park, and then headed in the direction of Rocky Mountain Lake. The locality was so fixed in their

minds that they had to make no inquiries. They had not gone far along Taylor Avenue, fronting the lake, when Bob exclaimed:

"That must be the house!"

It was the two-story frame structure which had been described to them, painted white with the green blinds, flowers in front and the winding graveled walk leading to the gate.

"No doubt of it," replied Maris. A few steps and the gate was drawn open, they passed the brief distance to the little porch upon which they stepped.

"This is your job, Maris," said his friend; "I'm only your escort."

"All right," replied the other, reaching up and sounding the bright brass knocker. The next moment the two observed that the brown knob was turning partly way round and back again in a jerky fashion. Somebody was fumbling with it and trying to draw the door inward. It was easy to guess who the person was and the boys smilingly awaited events.

By-and-bye the door was drawn inward and Molly Bidwell stood before them.

There could be no mistaking her, and she was a picture that did one's eyes good. The luxuriant brown hair, in two long braids that reached below her waist; the big bright brown eyes; the round cheeks as red as Baldwin apples; the plump figure and the dumpy legs that would have served well for an adult member of her sex—each recalling the familiar photograph—and, above all, an unmistakable likeness to Corporal Billy Bidwell left not a shadow of doubt as to who she was.

"How do you do, Molly?" said Maris; "we have come to call on you."

She looked up in their faces with innocent mystification.

"Molly, why don't you invite the gentlemen in?" called a voice from the little sitting room.

"We are coming in whether she invites us or not," said Maris, "and the first thing to be done is to plant a kiss on those red cheeks."

He was as good as his word. In the hall, Maris picked up the chubby, half-scared girl, bestowed a rousing smack on the cheek,

and then held her over while Bob Goodale did the same. The awed Molly was set down, and holding her hand, Maris accompanied her into the cosy apartment, with Bob directly behind them. "As is the rule," muttered Bob.

There a short, pudgy woman in spectacles with jolly features which recalled those of Corporal Bidwell, ceased her sewing and looked up. The pleasing fact that instantly caught one's eye was the neatness and cleanliness everywhere. Grandmother and child were dressed with the utmost plainness, but not a speck of untidiness showed on either or in the room itself.

Maris quickly explained the situation. When the old lady found that the visitors came directly from her son and that they had been with him only a few days before, she was as delighted as the child. Then Maris brought out the wooden doll which her father had carved for her. He had had it dressed up after a fashion by a milliner in Denver and kept the grotesque thing under his coat while on the street.

Molly clapped her hands and danced with joy. She climbed on the knee of Maris and

chattered unceasingly, asking about her father and wondering when he was coming home to see her and then she kissed and hugged her new doll. Now and then Maris loaned Molly to Bob, but some sort of intuition seemed to tell her who the real Santa Claus was.

Mrs. Bidwell knew a good deal about the boys, for in her son's letters received at irregular intervals, he never failed to refer to them.

"I should tell you some of the things Billy wrote," added the old lady, beaming through her glasses, "but it would make you blush."

"Billy doesn't think any more of us than we do of him," said Bob; "we never had a better friend than he was."

"I spoke to Captain Lawton about a furlough for him, though I didn't tell Billy, for fear he might be disappointed," said Maris, "but I shouldn't be surprised if he came home on a visit before long. Then, too, he is to be promoted to a sergeant."

"How glad we shall be to see him! Sometimes I worry a good deal about him, for he

must be in great danger out there; I pray for him every night and morning."

"So do I," added Molly, "and often through the day, whenever I think of it."

"And I am as certain as I am sitting here that the prayers of you both have had much to do in keeping away all danger from Billy," said Maris, gravely, for nothing could shake that sweet faith within him. "It will be a comfort for you to learn that the great peril that has so long hung over the Southwest is gone. The Apache Indians who caused the trouble have come in and surrendered. I don't believe there will be any more fighting worth taking into account for many a year to come."

"What a burden you have lifted from my heart!" said the mother, with a grateful sigh.

When the callers rose to go, Mrs. Bidwell urged them to spend the afternoon and evening at her home, but with the good taste which always marked the conduct of both, they thanked her and declined. So shaking hands with the good woman, and kissing Molly good-bye, they left.

Maris Roydon was silent for most of the

way back to the hotel. Stealing a glance at him his friend saw a suspicious moisture in his eyes.

"Bob," finally said he, "everyone in the world can do some good and what a mistake it is that we do not look for the chance. I wouldn't have missed that to-day for ten times the money it has cost. In fact it hasn't cost *me* anything; it's only another of mother's endless good deeds. She will be as happy as I when I tell her about it." Then the splendid young man added, "I'm not quite through yet."

At the hotel, after they had told Landlord Burr of their call, Maris added:

"I am going to leave three hundred dollars with you, Mr. Burr, which I wish you to deposit with one of the best grocers in Denver to the credit of Mr. Bidwell; I shall leave a hundred with the coal and wood dealer and I wish you to send her one hundred dollars, which is to be used for the benefit of herself and granddaughter."

"Yes, sir," gasped the almost speechless man."

"I suppose you will have to explain it to her, but don't give her my address."

"No, sir."

The money was turned over to the dazed landlord, and that same evening Maris Roydon and Bob Goodale resumed their homeward journey which was completed without incident worth mentioning.

Two weeks later, Sergeant Billy Bidwell jumped off the train before it had settled to rest in the Union Depot in Denver. He had been granted a month's furlough and came home as fast as steam could bring him, that he might spend the vacation with his child and his mother.

He first dropped in on Landlord Tom Burr to shake hands with him and hear something of the gossip of the city. The genial hotel man chatted a few minutes and then told his whole amazing story. The young man Maris Roydon had paid off every cent of the mortgage, including the interest due, and had left three hundred dollars for the grocer, one hundred for the coal man, and a hundred dollars for the mother and grandchild.

"I have fixed it with the others and you may as well take the hundred dollars with you, as I don't want to be bothered with it."

Sergeant Bidwell was stunned. It was several minutes before he could vaguely grasp what it all meant. Finally muttering something which no one understood, he plunged out of the hotel.

The next afternoon Sergeant Billy reappeared, his face showing how hard he was trying to repress his excitment.

"Say, Tom, I want you to let me have a room where I can write a letter—two of 'em."

"Nobody is in the writing room just now; help yourself."

Sergeant Billy located in the farthest corner, sat down and began his toil. Two hours later, the landlord walked past and took a sly look at his friend. He was leaning over the table, pen in hand and laboriously putting his thoughts on paper. His face was crimson, drops of prespiration stood on his forehead, his tongue was lolling out and every few minutes he sighed and grunted. Writing letters was harder work for him than trailing Apaches.

Sergeant Billy was too absorbed to notice the grinning landlord or anyone else. Late in the afternoon he completed his task.

What did it matter when he shoved the bulky missives into their envelops that he mixed them and sent each to the wrong address? The recipients at the other end of the line understood and by exchanging the letters each secured his own.

Would you like to read those ill-spelled, ungrammatical but fervent communications? I am sure you would appreciate and enjoy them. Well, here they are:

Come to think it over, however, I can't feel that it is exactly fair thus to spread before you the thoughts which possessed a certain sacredness of their own. So let us be content to say "Good-bye!"

THE END.

The Quaker in the Forum

By AMELIA MOTT GUMMERE

Author of "The Quaker: A Study in Costume," "Witchcraft and Quakerism," etc.

A New and Interesting Historical Study

Mrs. Gummere has taken up in this work the study of an aspect of Quakerism which has hitherto received little attention.

Quakerism has made an impression upon the two great English speaking nations of the globe in a way that is not yet fully appreciated, although the subject is beginning to receive more careful attention at the hands of competent historians. The author is concerned not with the impress made by the Quaker upon theology or philosophy, great as it has been, but with his influence upon social history. The unique feature of the Quaker's career has been that he largely succeeded in living out his unwritten creed in a philosophy that made belief a conduct of life and manifested to the world its practicability as a working theory.

The subject is treated in a manner to interest students of social history and is written in a style attractive to the general reader. This work contains fourteen interesting historical illustrations, some of which have not before been published.

Price $1.50 Net

THE JOHN C. WINSTON CO.

PHILADELPHIA

"THE WORK OF SCHOLARS IN THE LANGUAGE OF INTELLIGENT PEOPLE"

Hurlbut's Handy Bible Encyclopedia

——COMPRISING——

UNDER ONE ALPHABETICAL ARRANGEMENT

A CONCORDANCE TO THE SCRIPTURES; A SUBJECT DICTIONARY, showing where each topic in the Bible is found and how used; a BIBLICAL BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY; a BIBLICAL GEOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY, giving the location of places on the Maps; a Dictionary of ARCHAIC and OBSOLETE WORDS in the English Bible; Dictionary of BIBLICAL ANTIQUITIES, CUSTOMS, MUSICAL TERMS, PLANTS, ANIMALS, and PRECIOUS STONES; the PRONUNCIATION OF WORDS; the TRANSLATION OF CLASSICAL WORDS; and ENCYCLOPEDIC DESCRIPTIONS of the Books of the Bible. TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE, and MANY OTHER IMPORTANT SUBJECTS OF INTEREST TO ALL BIBLE STUDENTS.

PREPARED IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE

PRINTED FROM BOLD FACE TYPE

PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED

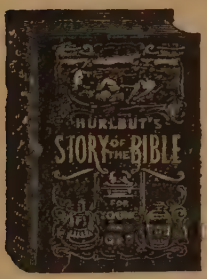
——EDITED BY——

REV. JESSE LYMAN HURLBUT, D. D.

8vo—450 Pages—Illustrated—Maps in Colors
Cloth Binding, with patent thumb alphabetical index.....$1.50
Sent postpaid on receipt of price.

THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY
WINSTON BUILDING PHILADELPHIA

A Veritable "Arabian Nights" of Entertainment
Containing 168 Complete Illustrated Stories.



HURLBUT'S STORY OF THE BIBLE

told for

YOUNG AND OLD

by

Rev. Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, D.D.

THE BIBLE MADE FASCINATING TO CHILDREN.—The heroes and the noble men and women of the Bible are made to appear as living, acting people. The book is an original work, and in no sense an imitation. It has been in preparation for a number of years.

THE DISTINGUISHED AUTHOR.—Dr. Hurlbut has long been associated with, and director of, the Sunday School work of one of the largest denominations, and he has been more closely associated with the detail work of the Chautauqua movement than has any other man. He is also well known as a writer.

REMARKABLE FOR THE BEAUTY AND NUMBER OF ITS ILLUSTRATIONS.—There are sixteen pictures in color prepared for this work by the distinguished artist, W. H. Margetson, and reproduced with the beauty and attractiveness of the artist's original work. There are also **nearly 300 half-tone** engravings in this remarkable book, which is as original in the selection of its illustrations as it is in its stories.

WHAT OTHERS THINK OF IT

"It is a needed and original work. Not an imitation."—*Christian Advocate*, New York.

"Written in such a style as to fascinate and hold the interest of child or man."—REV. F. E. CLARK, Pres. Society of Christian Endeavor.

"It is a beautiful book. I hope every family in the land will secure 'Hurlbut's Story of the Bible.'"—GENERAL O. O. HOWARD.

"The best book of its kind, and that kind the most important."—REV. JAMES A. WORDEN, Presbyterian B'd of Pub. and S. S. Work.

"I like very much the vocabulary you have used, and I can see how careful you have been in choosing understandable words."—MR. PHILIP E. HOWARD, *Sunday-School Times*, Philadelphia.

"It is the completest and best thing of the kind I have seen. The book is splendidly illustrated." MARIAN LAWRANCE, General Secretary International Sunday-School Association.

"Many will be drawn to the Bible who otherwise might look upon it as only adapted for older people."—HON. DAVID J. BREWER, Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

8vo, cloth. 750 pages. 16 color plates. 262 half-tone engravings. Net $1.50

Sent Postpaid on receipt of price.
THE JOHN C. WINSTON CO.,
Winston Building, Philadelphia.

NEW LIBRARY EDITION

—OF—

FAMOUS BOOKS

—BY—

EDWARD S. ELLIS

Stories dealing with pioneer life will always have an attraction for the young; and although the conditions are idealized and the dangers forgotten in the glamour and picturesqueness which are thrown around them, yet it is better when they are presented in the form which Mr. Ellis gives to them than in an ultra-sensational and often harmful shape.

Each volume is well illustrated, carefully printed on good paper, and handsomely bound in extra quality of ribbed cloth, with side and back stamped in colors. 12mo.

LIST PRICE 75 CENTS PER VOLUME

Across Texas	Path in the Ravine, The
Brave Tom	Phantom Auto, The
Brave Billy	Plucky Dick
Cabin in the Clearing	Righting the Wrong
Cruise of the Firefly	River Fugitives, The
Fire, Snow and Water	Storm Mountain
Four Boys	Tam, or Holding the Fort
Great Cattle Trail, The	Teddy and Towser
Hunt on Snow Shoes, A	Through Forest and Fire
Honest Ned	Up the Forked River
Jack Midwood	Wilderness Fugitives, The
Lena Wingo, the Mohawk	Wyoming
Limber Lew, the Circus Boy	Young Conductor, The
On the Trail of the Moose	Young Ranchers

SEND FOR CATALOG

THE JOHN C. WINSTON CO.

1006-1016 ARCH STREET PHILADELPHIA

GREAT PICTURES AS MORAL TEACHERS

By HENRY E. JACKSON

A Recognition of the Value of Pictures in Teaching

The author has selected twenty of the world's great pictures and sculptures and interpreted the meaning which the artist intended to convey.

People are awakening more and more to the value of works of art in teaching. They are regaining a truer perspective and saner judgment in regard to them. That pictures are of great value in teaching certain forms of knowledge is not now questioned; on the contrary, it is approved and practiced. In view of this, the need arises for careful selection and education of the popular taste. The present work is intended to meet this need. The author has chosen his subjects with great care and adopted as his interpretation the consensus of opinion among great critics.

The subject is treated in a manner to interest not only students of religious history and movements, but those viewing it from a purely artistic standpoint. The work contains twenty fine half-tone engravings made from authorized photographs of the original paintings and sculptures.

Price - - - - - - - - $1.50

The John C. Winston Co., Publishers
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

W